

SERMONS,

BY

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MINISTER OF WILTON. ^K

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|--|---|
| 23. line 3. from the bottom, for <i>ease</i> read <i>cause</i> . | 290. line 14. for <i>impure</i> read <i>impulse</i> . |
| 31. line 2. from the bottom, after <i>Christ</i> put a full point. | 282. line 1. for <i>worldly</i> , read <i>world</i> . |
| 34. line 12. for <i>warns</i> read <i>warms</i> . | 254. line 11. for <i>become</i> , read <i>becomes</i> . |
| 71. line 6. from the foot, for <i>subdued</i> read <i>subsided</i> . | 255. line 4. for <i>breath</i> , read <i>branch</i> . |
| 74. l. 3. for <i>innocence</i> , read <i>innocent</i> . | 256. last line for <i>undisciplined</i> read <i>undisciplined</i> . |
| 82. line 11. for <i>two</i> , read <i>too</i> . | 312. line 3. from foot, for <i>can</i> read <i>cannot</i> . |
| 92. line 5. for <i>temperance</i> , read <i>intemperance</i> . | 360. last line of note, for <i>junction</i> read <i>junction</i> . |
| 145. line 12. for <i>by</i> read <i>but</i> . | 364. last line, for <i>lived</i> read <i>loved</i> . |
| 160. l. 2. from foot, for <i>ture</i> read <i>true</i> . | 466. line 8. for <i>enchance</i> , read <i>en-
hance</i> . |
| 166. line 10. for <i>to</i> read <i>of</i> . | |
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spread</i> . | |



S E R M O N I.

Job vii. 16.

I would not live alway.

I SHALL present some views which lead us to think and say with Job, *I would not live alway.*

WE are led to this, from the state of things around us ; from the condition of mankind ; from the nature of human enjoyments ; from difficulty in the duties of life ; from the remains of sin ; and from the death of friends.

A

I. FROM

I. FROM the state of things around us. They are subject to dissolution, and are actually dissolving. Every year we behold proofs and symptoms of this. The flowers wither, and the corn is cut down ; trees and shrubs, which survive the season, yet drop their leaves and wear symptoms of decay ; the mountain oak, which flourished for ages, now stands a blighted trunk, inspiring melancholy. Places, renowned of old for beauty and defence, are known to us only by their names and ruins. Here and there are ruins of temples where our fathers worshipped. Of Jerufalem, and the temple of mount Zion, of which such glorious things are said, there is not one stone left upon another. Babylon the Great is fallen. Families, and states, and empires, and churches, have their rise, and glory, and decline. The earth itself is waxing old. The sun, and stars, and elements, shall at last dissolve. Years, as they pass, speak to us of the consummation of all things. Listen to their parting voice.

In

S E R M O N I

3

In still but solemn language, they speak of the Angel who shall lift up his hand to heaven, and swear by him that liveth for ever and ever, *Time shall be no more!*

And is it a thing desirable to live alway in the dissolving scene; to see the decay of so many seasons and so many generations, and still eke out a weary life till all be dissolved?

II. We are led to say with Job, *I would not live alway*, from the condition of mankind. 'One generation goeth and another cometh. The people are like the waves of the ocean; like the leaves of the wood they pass away in the blast, and other leaves lift their green heads.' Think, my brethren, on the age that is past. The persons venerable for age and wisdom, to whom we looked up in early years, have we not also seen going down to the grave?

A 2

Our

Our fathers where are they? Are we greater than our fathers? Is it not meet that we be gathered to them? *Gathered to our fathers*, not scattered and lost in the abyss of annihilation. *Gathered*, not to a foreign land, nor to persons unconnected and unknown, but to our fathers, the objects of our first and purest love, whose memory is still dear to our hearts. *Our fathers where are they?* Our hearts inquire after them, and search out the place where they be at rest, and forebode lying down with them. 'Why should not my countenance be sad,' said Nehemiah to the King of Babylon, 'seeing the city, the place of my father's sepulchre, lies waste?' The city is endeared by means of that sacred memorial.

A father's sepulchre is a school of wisdom. One considers there whence he came, and whither he is going. He reads, in humbling and affecting characters, 'Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.' He says to corruption, 'Thou art my father.'

S E R M O N I.

5

'ther.' The garment of mortality hangs loose upon him.

LET us change the scene. They who are in the early stages of life, through which we have passed, remind us that our day is far spent.

We are attached to those who succeed us in the world; whose attention and cheerfulness and strength, engage and delight and assist us; and whom perhaps we might otherwise envy and grudge a little, even this transient possession. Parents are attached by instinct; their image is renewed and their memory embalmed by children. While you learn from them your passing state, you are led by attachment to transfer the world to them, and to rejoice in their joy.

From this the young will probably look forward, and think of a time when they

A 3

shall

shall see us who now occupy the world laid in the grave, and another generation arise. Your desire of seeing many days is natural; and if you add a desire of serving God, and of teaching wisdom to the succeeding race, may your desires be accomplished. Still it is meet to warn you that the morning of life is often clouded with pain, and darkened with the shadow of death. To warnings of mortality the ears and hearts of the young open. I have seen their resignation whilst the hour drew nigh. I often see you, at the burial of the dead, standing round the grave with looks of thoughtful earnest attention. You think it is a cold and dark and lonely house. Gladly would I then announce immortality, and present to your mind's eye *this corruptible putting on incorruption*, and hear you also saying with Job, *I would not live alway.*

III. We are led to this from the nature of human enjoyments. Human enjoyments

ments indeed there are, nor does our Father grant them with a sparing hand; for he remembers that we are dust. In infancy, agreeable sensations spring from nourishment and care. In the days of our youth, every thing that is new, or beautiful, or great, delights the imagination. As we advance in life, affection and friendship and love are sources of peculiar and sweet enjoyment; it is enhanced by hope, and our ignorance of the evil to come. Employments which call forth our powers to exercise, money which purchaseth all things, and a good name, are the comforts of riper years. Many of us know from experience that they are fluctuating, and that the memory of our early joys is all of them that remains. There is indeed a melancholy pleasure in remembering them. The old love to talk of former days, and to tell us they were better than these: There is a predilection for the scenes of childhood and youth; they recal the smiling countenance and the careless heart:

Our early friends are endeared by many pleasing remembrances: The mournful remembrance of a first love, long ago in the dust, is preferred to any present pleasure. In old age the senses decay, the memory fails, the fire of imagination is extinguished; every year invades some faculty; we are at best supportable to our friends, and at last a burden. The sources of enjoyment are gradually dried up; to *live alway* would be to survive them all.

HUMAN enjoyments not only fade and decay; they are often blasted in the bud or the blossom. The most of men have met with disappointment in the pursuit of some favourite object of desire. We seldom live long, without something to allay our happiness, to tell us we are men, and that *man is born to trouble*. Job's sad and sudden reverse of fortune is a remembrancer to the happy.

Beside

S E R M O N I.

9

Beside the real disappointments and evils of life, there are imaginary evils. Some have hours of deep and awful melancholy. Darkness overspreads the soul. All earthly enjoyments lose their relish. The ordinary cares of life are a burden. Even friends displease. There is an appetite for retirement, for the lodging place of a way-faring man in the wilderness; to sit alone, and listen to the howling wind, and see the leaves falling, and muse on the end of man. With difficulty we are dragged to the duties of life, and fulfil as an hireling our day. The soul is struggling to break through the mist of human things, to know their emptiness, to know itself, to know its large capacity for happiness which God alone can fill.

THERE is a time of life with every thinking person, when he looks no more forward to worldly objects of desire, when he leaves these things behind, and medi-

tates the evening of his day. Age', said a pious old man, 'age is the most busy period of human life, but its transactions are not with men'. Commune with your own heart, on the dangers you have escaped, and the duties you have fulfilled. The season of inexperience and passion is past; thank God if it has passed with innocence. Think on the mercies of so long a life, and take up songs of praise. Cultivate the fruits of the spirit; faith, and hope, and love. These flourish in the winter of life; they are rooted in the soul, and the decay of these bodies and the dissolution of this world cannot destroy them; they shall soon be transplanted into the garden of God, and watered with the river of pleasure, and spring up into eternal life. Every root of bitterness shall then be plucked up, and no enemy shall sow his tares any more.

IV. WE

IV. WE are led to think and say, with Job, '*I would not live alway,*' from difficulty in the duties of life.

Favourable circumstances often attend our entrance into the world. The vigour of youth, the pleasure of novelty, conscious dignity from acting a part, pleasant connections that are formed, countenance and encouragement and applause; these reconcile and attach us to our duty, they induce the power of habit.

By and by, difficulties arise which gradually reconcile us to our change. The honest labourer, who earns his bread with the sweat of his brow, has found his rest sweet, and his bread pleasant, and the testimony of his conscience a continual feast: But he has likewise found, from weariness and pain, from the hardships of poverty, perhaps of oppression, that his labour is part of the curse on fallen man: He thinks with comfort of a new heaven and a new earth,

earth, where there is no more curse. It is sometimes difficult to fulfil the demands of justice; then a Christian redoubles industry, denies himself, accepts alms, does every thing hard and humbling rather than be unjust: It is not his least consolation that the time is short. Even in a high station honours are apt to fade and cares to multiply. It was the prayer of Moses, the lawgiver and prince of Israel, 'Kill me, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight.'

The detail of human affairs and duties must be attended to and fulfilled; the pleasures and honours of the world must to a certain degree interest and elevate, and the evils of it depress us; but the conscious soul often rises above them, and anticipates a more exalted exercise. In childhood we busied ourselves with imitations of the works of men; and if any accident befel them we were distressed and wept: We now think that these were trifles, and we shall

shall one day think the same of every worldly care.

V. *WE would not live alway, from the remains of sin.*

When a Christian first gives his heart to God, and sees the beauty of holiness, and feels devout joy, he says in the ardour of his love, *I will keep all thy commandments.* Even after temptation has prevailed, and made him taste the bitterness of remorse, he resolves upon new obedience with redoubled ardour; he knows good and evil, and he will never return to folly. Experience has at last convinced him that human resolution is weak, that the heart is deceitful, that sin is wedded to mortality. The past makes him tremble for the future; and even assures him that temptation will return, and mingle all his days on earth with penitential sorrow. His comfort is, that with God there is mercy, that Christ died

died for the remission of sin, that the Spirit is promised to those who ask. His comfort is, that he grows in grace, that the love of sin is mortified, that the remains of it excite him to prayer and watchfulness, that death will put an end to temptation ; then his comfort and joy will be full. Happy day ! which will conclude this mingled scene, when the heart shall no more be tossed with passions, when the power of evil habits shall be broken, when I shall sin no more.

VI. THE death of friends makes us say, with Job, *I would not live alway.*

Friendship sweetens life ; but the course of human affection is often interrupted, is often varied, is often embittered. In your father's house the heart is at ease a little, it flows out in pure and sweet affection to your parents ; happy in their love and protection, free from pain and guilt, and the thought

thought of to morrow, you give yourself to joy, and think it is good to be here. The death of a parent is often the first sad stroke. The bright scene vanishes. Pleasure is shut out. Your first sorrow is a sacred season ; sacred to affectionate remembrance, to devout resignation, to the faith of immortality. Sober thoughts revolve on the part you have to act. In returning to the world you feel yourself a stranger, and cast your cares on God, and think of heaven as your Father's house.

Youth seldom passes without the death of a young friend. Death is brought near, for we grew up together. Many pleasing hopes are laid in dust. From the grave of a friend even the path of virtue appears dark and lonely.

The happiest union on earth must be dissolved, and the love of life dissolves with it.

Parents

Parents often survive their children, and refuse to be comforted, because they are not.

A beautiful view of Providence opens. That which constitutes our greatest felicity on earth makes us most willing to depart. The friends of our youth have failed. Such friendships are not formed any more. Affection is gradually transferred to the world of spirits. We are strangers who have sojourned long in a foreign land, and have the near prospect of returning home. The hour of departure rises on the soul, for we are going to a land peopled with our fathers, and our kindred, and the friends of our youth. The heart swells at times with the sadly pleasing remembrance of the dead. 'Awake and sing ye that sleep in dust, your dew is as the dew of herbs.' At times we overpass by faith the bounds of mortality, and penetrate within the veil. Our spirits mingle with theirs.

S E R M O N

S E R M O N II.

Preached before the Society in Scotland for propagating
Christian Knowledge, 1779.

1 TIMOTHY, ii. 1.

*I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications,
prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be
made for all men.*

INTERCESSIONS have an effect on so-
cial virtue.

PRAYER for our Country is a mean of
loving it. The Psalmist concludes his pray-
er for Jerusalem with this resolution, "I
will seek thy good." Love to the Public,

B

when

when exalted by Prayer, discovers itself in generous sentiment and heroic virtue. The voice of interest, of pleasure, and of every selfish passion is put to silence. The Lover of Truth and of his Country is ready, in their cause, to sacrifice whatever is desirable and dear. "*Forgive their sin,*" said Moses, when interceding for Israel, *forgive their sin I pray thee, or blot me out of the book which thou hast written.* Esther, when her people were devoted, consecrated three days to Prayer, *after which I will go in unto the king, which is not according to the Law, and if I perish I perish.* Judas Maccabeus, in the day of national calamity, retained in the wilderness, and cherished by prayer, love to his country and reverence for her laws: his example animated a few friends: by repeated successes they greatly multiplied: *fighting with their hands, and praying unto God with their hearts, they waxed valiant, out of weakness were made strong*

strong, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

While war and rumours of war prevail, a relation to the public, concern for its interests, and compassion for human misery, are deeply felt. These feelings are expressed in intercession and supplication. We contemplate the Almighty in his righteous judgments, correcting a luxurious selfish spirit, humbling the pride of wealth, rank, and dominion, calling forth the active and generous and sympathizing virtues. By faith we see the cloud dissolve. "*Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee.*"

ABRAHAM'S intercession for Sodom did not avert the impending judgement; but he felt a generous concern for human nature, he enjoyed communion with God, and entered into the plan of his providence, in shewing favour to the wicked for the sake of the righteous. Instead of a careless indifference and cold insensibility, he

looked toward Sodom, pondering the ways of God. *I will sing of judgement and of mercy : to thee, O Lord, will I sing.*

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST is an object more liberal and extensive than our native land, and attracts more powerfully the prayers of Christians. *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* We feel ourselves the subjects of a kingdom not of this world, and every child of God our fellow-citizen. We feel an union of spiritual interests, and privileges, and hopes. Zeal passes from the brightest temporal object ; and fixes on righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

In praying for the Church, it is of consequence to know for what we pray. Public spirit, when misguided, violates the laws ; and a misguided zeal for the Church of Christ violates his law of love. The
I church

church of Christ is not limited by any particular form of worship, or government, or belief ; it comprehends all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. Our external constitution, like the fabric in which we worship, will fall into decay, and the form will be changed ; but the reign of Christ is in the hearts of men. *So long as the sun and moon endure, a seed shall serve him.*

While devout love extends to Christians of every denomination, we contemplate the hand of Providence in the different ways of thinking among men. These call forth the exercise of reason, and lead to the discovery of truth. They kindle a zeal for truth, which made Paul assert and vindicate, in opposition to Peter, the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. From the days of Paul many able assertors of liberty have arisen. Tyranny over the human understanding has been resisted even unto blood ; and, after the struggle of ages, the air of liberty is breathed again. We behold a-

bounding sects, as so many pledges of the right of private judgement—a sacred right, which it is the glory of this nation, and of this age to respect.

There is indeed a dark side. Strife and contention sometimes mingle. This is a memorial of human frailty. Desire springs forward to the rest that remains. We look up to God, *who stills the noise of the waves and the tumults of the people*, and trace the operation of his Providence. Divisions, which were formed in anger and stained with blood, redound to the increase of knowledge and forbearance. Principle is respected, and mistakes are pardoned. The multitude of sects abates their animosity. They are drawn together again by the band of love, and at last conclude, *That to fear God and keep his commandments is the whole of man.*

In praying for all men, we remember
that

that they are brethren ; that we shall sleep together in the dust ; that we are fellow-travellers to a land where strife and contention, anger and debate, pride and hypocrisy, shall prevail no more. We join our prayers and praises with those who fear God and work righteousness, of every nation and kindred and language. "*Let the people praise thee, O Lord, let all the people praise thee.*"

While prayers for the public weal are offered up, there is often, it must be owned, a listless indifference in our assemblies. Whether it be that the object is too great, or that the sameness tires, or that our method be defective, or that human laws accord not with the spirit of prayer, or that love to the public and zeal for religion be indeed waxing cold ; or whatever else be the case, the effect is visible. I shall therefore prosecute the argument in particular and familiar instances.

INTERCESSION improves and regulates parental love. Can a mother forget her sucking child, compassed about with dangers by night and by day, the least of which may destroy? Can she better express her compassion, and ensure the success and comfort of her own care and watchfulness, than by committing her child to the *Shepherd of Israel, who slumbers not nor sleeps?*

Youth is the season of temptation. While Job's children were feasting, *he offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, It may be my children have sinned.* Intercession directs parental love, not to the wealth, and beauty and worldly honour; but rather to the innocence and piety of children.

Many of our young men go abroad, especially in war. To parents the hour of separation is dark. They follow their children in devout affection through scenes
of

of manifold danger and temptation. Rest returns to their souls in committing them to God, who is *the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea.*

Even in the case of a degenerate child, hope is cherished by communion with him who *waiteth to be gracious.*

The affectionate supplication of parents may prove a mean of reclaiming the prodigal. In a solitary hour he will perhaps reflect on their unmerited affection, and listen to the voice of nature, and meditate a return to virtue. These reflections, it is true, are swept away in the next excess of riot. They will recur however and make a deep impression, so soon as dis-ease, or want, or imprisonment has brought him to himself. Beginning in good earnest to relent, and to think whether any mean of reconciliation be yet in his power; he is not a little encouraged by the devout
concern

concern of his parents. If they be earnest to obtain forgiveness from God, they themselves will not withhold forgiveness.

THE prayer which little children are taught to put up for their father and their mother, may be considered as the beginning of piety and filial love, and a mean of unfolding them.

Objections have indeed been made to the teaching of piety to children; and a well known writer on education has condemned it *. In a question of this kind, parents will judge for themselves; but, in forming a judgement, they might inquire,
If

* ROUSSEAU seems to be an enemy to prayer in every form. "I thank God for his gifts; but I do not pray to him. What should I ask?" He professes "not to philosophize with his pupil, but to assist him in consulting his own heart." And is there not in the heart a tendency to prayer, strongly felt at times; as in danger, which human power cannot avert;

If there be instinctive regards to a heavenly as well as to earthly parents ; if a taste for devotion, as well as for propriety and elegance, may improve by culture ; if early impressions of piety be apt to recur after youthful dissipation had seemed to efface them ;

vert ; in perplexity, from which human prudence cannot extricate ; under sorrow, for which this world yields no consolation ; and under the pangs of an awakened conscience ? And is there not a similar tendency to intercession ; “ God help you,” is a common and natural exclamation when the help of man is vain. “ The Lord have mercy on your soul,” are the last words when sentence of death is pronounced. It is the returning sentiment of compassion which passes from the severity of justice to a tribunal where mercy may be found. Why do the people desire the prayers of prophets and saints, and estimate their prayers according to their sanctity ? Was it not a dictate of the heart that made the mothers of Israel bring their little children to Jesus, that he might put his hands on them and pray ? What means that ancient practice of asking a parent’s blessing, asking it in the most interesting moments, when they leave their father’s house, or when, on his death-bed, he bids them a last farewell ? And why does a parent’s curse in those interesting

them ; and if they who do not remember their Creator in the days of their youth be likely ever to remember him. They might inquire what this meaneth, *Suffer little children to come unto me* ; and what this promise meaneth, *They that seek me early shall find me.*

Affection descends, and love to parents is not so easily retained as love to children. Most of the passions subside with age, and the last human passion which warms the heart is love to children. The young are agitated with new connections and pursuits, which obstruct the returns of filial love. Prayer for parents might, in some

interesting moments make the blood run cold ? Rousseau himself drops a philosophy which accords so ill with human nature, and so very ill with the peculiar sensibility of his own heart ; and describes, in another part of his works, with his usual eloquence, the tendency to intercession, with its consoling and reclaiming power, in the case of a believing wife for an unbelieving husband.

some measure, remove those obstructions. Even in foreign lands, and amidst busy scenes, the heart would melt at times with the remembrance of aged parents, and yield many soothing acknowledgements of the debt of love which they still owe.

The prayers of parents with and for their children have an effect on filial love. "I bless the Lord, says Mr Flavel, for a religious tender father, who often poured out his soul to God for me. This stock of prayers and blessings, I esteem above the fairest inheritance on earth." With one who is apt to reflect and feel, the remembrance of many prayers, which pious parents offered up, is a touching remembrance, and draws to virtue. "Shall I trouble their rest by departing from innocence? Shall I frustrate the last strong desire of their parting spirits? Can I doubt that the favour of God extends to the children of his worshippers? From the day that they forsook me, his favour hath compassed me about, it still encom-

encompasseth me."—In this train of thought, ancient affection revives, the force of example is felt, and the sweetness of promise, and the power of prayer.

THE Prayers of husband and wife for each other tend to strengthen and sweeten their union. Affection may decline, it may be interrupted by fallies of unguarded passion, it may be soured by peevishness. These evils might be prevented by praying for each other. When they call to mind in the presence of God, the relation by which they are connected, and the duties which belong to it, they feel an indispensable obligation to fulfil them. Every neglect is perceived to be wrong. Infidelity is thought of with horror, as a violation of the oath of God, and the utter extinction of domestic peace. A sense of duty is brought in to the aid of affection, by prayer; nor is there a likelier method to revive affection

affection, and re-establish kind offices upon their true foundation.

If the yoke be unequal, prayer is a resource to the believer. A believing wife, who meets with unkindness where she looked for love, and had reason to expect it, silently takes up her cross, intercedes with him who can change the heart, and overcomes evil with good. The trial may be lengthened out, but prayer opens the designs of Providence. Your way is hedged with thorns, but they are planted by a father's hand. He makes the staff of human comfort pierce through your hand and break under you, that his own rod and staff may comfort you. Great is the reward of meekness and patience, of prayers and tears, of humble, silent, despised virtue.

Pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you, is the law of Christ, spiteful, cruel usage, pour the poison of revenge in-
to

to a worldly mind ; but the disciple of Christ passes from astonishment to prayer, and receives the cup from God. Instead of avenging himself, he gives place unto wrath, and persists in offices of love to his enemy. This is *heaping coals of fire on his head*, fit to melt down the most obdurate resentment.

INTERCESSION sustains and elevates Friendship. Prayer for an absent friend revives ancient affection with a pleasing warmth: It unites us, as it were, in the presence of that Being who sees at once the thoughts of every heart. We anticipate an everlasting union, and are animated in the way that leads to it.

It supports and encourages a good man in the ways of goodness, to think that his friends interest themselves in the continuance and progress of his virtue, that they are instant with God in his behalf.

If

If he ever falls from innocence, he has this mournful consolation, that the friends of virtue weep with him ; that their supplications ascend with his for pardon and reconciliation, for redoubled watchfulness and zeal ; that the stain on his christian profession may be wiped off, and the wound in his conscience healed.

Supplication for a brother overtaken in a fault conveys this caution to the suppliant : *Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*

THE prayers of a MINISTER for the people to whom he ministers, lead to tenderness and condescension. They subdue pride, impatience, and languor in the work of the ministry. His soul is stirred up with the elevating thought that he is a fellow-worker together with God. Paul's prayer for the Ephesians is a pattern: *I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus*
C *Christ,*

Christ, That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in his love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

In the progress of this prayer, the apostle warns, and glows, and labours for adequate language; his own soul is filled with all that fulness. This is a natural effect of Intercession. In the moments of communion with God, divine love is shed abroad in the heart of the worshipper, it is reflected on those who are dear to him, and expands in devout benevolence. To this exercise the Creator has annexed delight.

The delight indeed is transient; and they who would protract it often fall into an uneasy state of mind, to which darkness,

ness, desertion, and other mournful names are given. If you would escape from that uneasy state, mingle active virtue with piety, and to your prayers for others add labours of love.

The Intercession of Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, is one of the many particulars in which the doctrine of mediation corresponds to human nature. He prayed for his disciples in the hour of temptation, and in the hour of sorrow. It is a standing consolation to his friends, that *we have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous.* It is a bond of union with Jesus, and a pledge of the continuance of his love. It is a new and living way by which we have boldness to draw near to God.

PRAYER for the afflicted moulds the heart into a serious frame. We think on

the worth and uncertainty of health, and view our life on earth as a pilgrimage.

Bishop Butler observes, That "compassion is added to the general principle of benevolence, to give it a special bias to the miserable, with a view to prevent or alleviate misery." Agreeably to this it may be further observed, that those who pray for others feel themselves particularly interested in the cause of the afflicted, and are disposed to pray earnestly for them. This may be considered as an additional provision for the exercise of good offices toward those who stand most in need of them.

For the good offices which prayer inspires, a reward is provided in the prayers of those who receive them. It is natural for one who is deeply injured to cry unto God against the oppressor; and when delivered, to pray for his deliverer. *The Lord requite you*, is a common expression of gratitude

gratitude with those who can make no other requital: it is one of the cases where a tendency to intercession is felt, and the devout cherish gratitude by prayer for their benefactors. To the oppressor it is an alarming thought, That the cry of those whom he has injured is entering into the ear of the Lord; while the humane think with pleasure, that prayers for them are rising up as incense from the hearts of those whom they have instructed or relieved or comforted. This pleasure is a reward suited to the frame of devout benevolence.

Even when we have it not in our power to give any considerable relief, it still yields some comfort to the afflicted to share the sympathy of those around them. It is comfort to have the burden of their afflictions, the secret workings of their souls unfolded, and expressed in prayer by a tender hearted Christian.

Prayers

Prayers for the sick are enjoined in Scripture, and it goes with the current of the heart to offer them. When a friend is sick of an incurable disease, and our friendship cannot make the cup pass from him, we lift up our souls in prayer to the God of all consolation. Importunity, which some have censured, but which Christ enjoins, is then felt to be a dictate of the heart as well as of the gospel. Fervent supplication begets a just sense of spiritual good things. As the fire of devotion burns we set our hearts on the favour of God, and feel that happiness depends upon it. Fervid desires toward God moderate every worldly desire. Our souls return unto their rest. If this be the tendency of fervent prayer, the objection against fervour is removed. If still it shall be called Enthusiasm, there is nothing in a word. If an elevation of mind above this world; if a generous love, whose bands affliction cannot loose; if a sense of the real permanent interests of human nature, and

and ardent aspirations after them—if this be enthusiasm, it is yet an enthusiasm which every good man loves to feel, in which he rejoices, yea and will rejoice.

The afflicted are disposed, in their turn, to pray for those who sympathise with and minister to them. Imploring from on high a requital of the kindness, they devolve their debt of gratitude on the God of recompences. When one is sick unto death, he thinks of those who are dear to him, commends them to God, and commits them to his providential care. A dying man seems nearer to God; his prayers make a deep impression on children and friends; and perhaps on enemies, when he prays God to forgive them. Eusebius tells of a martyr who obtained an hour's respite, and employed it in prayer, supplication, and giving of thanks for all men. He remembered those who were known and dear to him. He prayed for Christians, and Jews, and Gentiles; for the Em-
C 4 peror

peror by whose edict he suffered, for the executioners, and the spectators.

There is an elevation and dignity in the prayer of a dying Christian. His own affliction is lost in a generous concern for others. He was never more a citizen of the world, and never more zealous for the interests of truth and virtue. Far from renouncing his attachments here, he yields his heart to all the fervour and tenderness of love. Love was the prevailing affection of his life, and he utters his last breath in prayers for his brethren.

THE

THE SOCIETY FOR PROPAGATING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE was formed about the beginning of this century: It has obtained countenance from the Legislature, the General Assembly, and many liberal Christians. Much Good has been done. In the state of the Highlands, it appears that much remains to be done. Fellow citizens, in want and ignorance, have a claim to the alms and prayers of their happier brethren.

Some complain of the decay of piety: and there are symptoms of decay. Two occur in the printed state of the Society. One is, that twenty thousand pounds of the produce of the forfeited estates were appropriated by Parliament, for erecting schools in the Highlands; but never applied: We cannot help imagining to ourselves the good this would have done, and regretting that it is left undone. The other is, that many parishes have no legal schoolmaster:

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We know not the grounds upon which the heritors justify themselves; but if it be indeed the love of money, which makes them withhold the pittance allowed by law to schoolmasters, we must conclude that Christian knowledge is of small moment in their eye.

There are other symptoms of the decay of piety which I will not enumerate; but in the midst of these, the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge is a symptom of the first love, and an attempt to quicken the things that are ready to die. While persons every way eminent join in so good a work, and the hearts of the people open, and the pleasure of the Lord prospers, we cannot think that faith and charity have failed.

This institution gives an object and an effect to Christian zeal. The influence of rank, and the powers of genius, and the knowledge of affairs, are exerted in the
cause

cause of piety. Intercession and giving of thanks accord with your pious labours. While you plant and water, you look to God for the increase: When he giveth the increase, you offer thanksgiving.

The exercise of devotion will enlighten your zeal, and support you under discouragements, and raise you above the praise of men. To the praise of men you are justly entitled; it is no mean reward, and it is freely given you; but, in the presence of God, you feel and acknowledge that you have done only what was your duty to do.

You are zealous to propagate the gospel in distant corners; and you will be still more zealous where you are more immediately accountable. Command your children and your household to keep the way of the Lord. Confess Jesus before men; your example will encourage fearful and faint-hearted disciples to confess him.

ONE end of this Institution is to prevent the growth of Popery. It is meet that our deliverance from that cruel superstition be remembered with gratitude, and that proper means be used for perpetuating the deliverance. One mean of acknowledged propriety and of proven success is, to propagate Christian Knowledge. A form of worship where the understanding and the heart are excluded, cannot bear the light. Your zeal for the PROTESTANT INTEREST is becoming, while it prompts you to instruct the ignorant.

THE fund for propagating Christianity is a standing admonition to the rich. They are impatient of the word of exhortation, and this is a silent monitor. One who has leisure and a taste for doing good, may turn a little money to more account by bestowing it in his own way; but some who have large estates, and are liberally paid by the public, have not leisure to turn
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what they bestow to a good account : By bestowing it here that will be done. The rich are most interested in the public weal, and this is one way of promoting it.

Some who are very rich are yet, from peculiar circumstances in their lot, very unhappy: From forwarding this and other good works, they might derive consolation.

In the day of prosperity the heart devises liberal things. When you succeed to an inheritance, or prosper in trade, or obtain a lucrative employment or a rich alliance, or any domestic joy, here you may present a thank-offering, and hallow your joy.

Here likewise sin-offerings may be offered. They who have deceived and corrupted youth, if they be now come to a better mind, may contribute to fortify the young against future deceivers.

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In a commercial state, where money is so much valued, and poverty despised, iniquity will abound. In turning from iniquity, restitution is essential. There are cases where it cannot be made to the persons injured. The resolution of casuists is, that the money should be given to some pious use. Here you may give it with secrecy, and with confidence that it will be properly applied.

They who have grown rich by traffic, without conscious fraud, have yet reason to suspect themselves. The desire of gain, which is habitual to a trafficker; the opportunities for defrauding which fall in his way; the doubtful cases which arise, and which self-partiality is apt to determine, are grounds of suspicion. One of a tender conscience will purify his gains by an offering.

We cannot but observe, even in some of the best characters among the rich, "one
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“ thing wanting.” They are found in the faith, and regular in their conduct, and amiable in their manner: They are not far from the kingdom of heaven. Let such do good, and be rich in good works; that they may lay hold on eternal life.

A legacy, though it be the least edifying and least meritorious charity, is better than none.

THEY who have not much to give, have an opportunity, on the return of this day, to express their good wishes by their mite.

ATTENTION to this, and other good works, might correct the present tendency to expensive living, by which so many families are broken down, and credit shaken. We may indeed tell the expensive, how much good might be done with the price of one entertainment, or of one ornament;
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and they sometimes listen ; for a compassionate and expensive turn are not incompatible. An eloquent representation might draw from them considerable sums. If I possessed such eloquence I would hesitate to exert it. It would be wrong to give to this, or any other charity, what is due to your creditors, or to those of your own house. You yourselves would repent. The gifts of the wise, like those of God, are without repentance.

Moderation in all things is a pure and permanent source of good works. When you have tasted the pleasure of doing good, it will bear down the pleasure of expensive shew. Instead of contriving additional conveniences, and ornaments, and meats, you will contrive which of them may be spared. difficulty in paying debt arises chiefly from the purchase of superfluities. By retrenching these, you will be able to pay punctually, and have something over to indulge benevolence.

BESIDE

BESIDE the direct influence of this institution, it is a memorial of the importance of Christianity, and a provocation to spread it by every proper mean. Such means every Christian possesses, in some degree, by his prayers and by his pattern; by the influence of rank, and wealth, and reputation; and by his influence with those who esteem and love him. Such of us as have families may propagate Christian knowledge with success in them. Many who have families might entertain and educate one or more of the children of the poor. This appears to me a method of doing the most good at the least expence. It is rescuing a fellow creature from ignorance and bad habits. The field which we cultivate, and the plants which we rear, acquire an interest in our care: Much more the human heart, where we have sown and reared the fruits of righteousness. *Who so receiveth one of these little ones in my name, receiveth me.*

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The number of poor children is at present great. The families of many soldiers and sailors are left in want: Kindness is due to them. The portion of many orphans and fatherless children is lost by bankruptcy. If men who live in pleasure, and contract debt without the means of paying it, and stoop to falsehood and fraud; if such men cannot feel for the misery they draw down on the innocent, it is the more necessary that Christians endeavour to alleviate that misery. Self-denial in this cause, and an oeconomy which the world condemns, are sacrifices with which God is well pleased.

Other ways of doing good might be suggested; but, if you be zealous for good works, your own heart will suggest them.

SER-

S E R M O N III.

Rev. i. 17. 18.

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead : and he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not ; I am the first and the last ; I am he that liveth and was dead ; and behold I am alive forevermore, amen ; and have the keys of hell and of death.

WHEN I saw him I fell at his feet as dead. It is John who speaks, the disciple whom Jesus loved. He was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind him a great voice as of a trumpet ; and being turned he saw one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about with a golden girdle ; his eyes were as a flame of fire,

out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. Such was the glorious and terrible majesty which John beheld: but amidst the glory and the terror he perceived a likeness to the Son of man, to that amiable and tender friend with whom he once enjoyed the sweet intercourse of love, and who was still the object of his affectionate and devout remembrance. The appearance of such a friend, after a long separation, overpowered this tender hearted disciple; he could not support the awe and the joy; he fell at his feet as dead.

He laid his right hand upon me; an act of kind and careful attention; and said unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last; the Word that was in the beginning, the everlasting Father. Fear not: I whom you now behold in majesty and beauty am indeed he who was dead, whom you saw crucified; and am alive, of whose resurrection

rection you was a joyful witness; whom you saw ascend into heaven, where *I live forevermore*. Though you be still in a state exposed to sin and to death, *fear not, I have the keys of hell and of death*. Thus he raised up and comforted his beloved disciple, and thus he comforts all who love him.

Even the friends of Jesus behold his glory with awe. Trembling mingles with their joy. Their hearts melt at times with the manifestations of his love, and they fall at his feet as it were dead. For such are these words of comfort, FEAR NOT.

I am the first and the last. He is the first born of every creature. By him the worlds were made. Unto him all power in heaven and in earth is committed. His administration is planned by wisdom, supported by power, animated by love; and you are the subjects of it. Of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Fear not, I am he which was dead. This, Christians, is the great object of our faith, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. It is the source of consolation to the guilty. To those who labour and are heavy laden with the power and the guilt of sin, his language is, *Fear not; I am he which was dead, whose blood was shed for the remission of sin, who suffered to sanctify the people.* His death was not only an atonement for the guilt of sin, but also a deliverance from its power and dominion, a purification from its pollution and defilement. By the cross of Christ the world is crucified to us, and we unto the world; the flesh is crucified with its affections and lusts; there we learn patience, we learn humility, we learn generous, disinterested, tender love. Among motives to holiness, the cross of Christ excels: we are invited by other considerations, but we are drawn by love; other motives persuade and engage,

gage, but dying love has a constraining influence.

Fear not, I am alive. If Christ be not risen, our preaching is vain, and your faith is vain. But it was impossible for him to be holden by death; he had power to lay down his life, and to take it again. Hear the words of a faithful and true witness. *Behold there was a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and sat upon it; his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the keepers did shake and became as dead men. But the Angel said to the woman, Fear not ye, I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified; he is not here, he is risen.* Behold him awakening to life, proving himself to be the Son of God with power, bringing in the dawn of everlast-

ing day. So often as your faith begins to fail, and fear springs up at the melancholy view of death and the grave and corruption; remember that Christ is risen, that he is the resurrection and the life, and because he lives ye shall live also. This is a plain and sure foundation of our hope, *which hope we have as an anchor of the soul sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus.*

That doubts and fears may never return, *I live for evermore.* Henceforth he is beyond the power of death. God hath put all his enemies under his feet. For the suffering of death he is crowned with glory and honour, and seated on his Father's throne, and lives and reigns for ever. He ever lives to make intercession for us. Glorious and exalted as he is, the interests of his people are still dear to him. *Ye are they who have continued with me in my temptation,*

temptation, and I appoint unto you kingdoms even as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom *. How doubts and fears and discouragements diminish in our eye, when we are admitted to a temporary communion here below, and his banner over us is love! and how will they all disappear, when we are admitted to the upper house, to that table which will not be drawn, and eat and drink with Jesus—eat of the fruit of the tree of life, and drink from those rivers of pleasure that are at God's right hand.

WE are yet in the Wilderness. The last stage of this pilgrimage is through the vale of death. We eye with reluctance that dark vale, and shrink back at the swellings of Jordan. *Fear not, I have the keys of death.* He opens, and no man can shut. The

* Luke xxii. 30.

The sea shall render up the dead that are in it; and death and hell the dead that are in them. At the brightness of his coming this corruptible shall put on incorruption. Where then are thy fears of death, O believer? What though these bodies bend with years, and our senses decay, and the earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved? What though we be separated from those who love us, with whom we are connected by ancient and tender ties—though death take from mine eyes the friend of my youth, my companion in labour, my adviser in straits, my solace in adversity; though I lay his body in the grave and weep? The keys of death *are in my Saviour's hand.*

Mourn, Christians, for departed friends, but mourn not even as others which have no hope. Think not that your friends are lost. Think it not a vain thing to have cultivated kind affections, and virtuous friendship,

ship, and holy love, toward those who are gone before. How small a moment has yet to pass, and we all assemble in the world of spirits! He seems for a moment to forsake you, but with everlasting mercies will he gather and unite you!

I SHALL conclude this discourse on the consolations of Jesus with a short application; first, to those who feel them; secondly, to those who at present feel them not.

We congratulate those who feel joy in believing. It is joy which passeth human understanding, which the world cannot give nor take away, which remains though the world be dissolved. Let such be exhorted to prize and to improve their comforts. Maintain that sacred joyful fellowship with the Father and with the Son by self-denial, by deadness to the world, by keeping at an awful distance from every carnal

carnal and corrupt affection. *Seeing God has spoken peace to your souls, return not again any more unto folly.*

Beware of self-deceit in those pious and devout emotions. Think not that the whole of religion consists in them. They are rather to be considered as refreshments and cordials by the way ; that our hearts faint not, that our faith fail not, that we do not forget our native country in this foreign land ; that having found the stream so sweet, we may long to drink at the fountain. But those devout pleasures are to be suspected when they make you fretful and peevish, and apt to lose your temper when they are interrupted, even by the calls of justice and humanity ; for one fruit of the Spirit is meekness ; they are to be suspected when they make you sour and morose, banishing cheerfulness from your countenance and your heart ; for another fruit of the spirit is joy ; they are to be suspected when you forget good works ;
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for another fruit of the Spirit is love to the brethren : they are greatly to be suspected when you begin to value yourselves and to despise others, on account of these experiences and attainments ; for then spiritual pride has entered—spiritual pride, of all the diseases of the soul the most dangerous, the most hopeless.

I AM now to address those from whom the comforts of devotion are withdrawn ; who do not feel the penetrating sense of God's loving kindness which they once felt, and which caused their hearts to rejoice. Let such inquire diligently, whether they have forfeited those joys by any wicked action or corrupt affection. If this be the case, the only way to comfort is through sincere repentance and humility. Joy is sown, but it is to the righteous ; and gladness to the upright in heart. There may likewise be some whose hearts do not reproach them with wilful disobedience, who yet feel a coldness

coldness of affection and deadness in the things of God ; they desire to walk in the ways of wisdom, but the bright prospect seldom opens. For the sake of such I observe, that the meltings of affection and the flames of love are indeed delightful ; to the upright they sweeten the trials of life, and yield a foretaste of the rest that remains ; but they do not constitute piety : they depend in part on the bodily frame, and they may pass through minds that are strangers to virtue ; but *this is the love of God that ye keep his commandments.*

If your hearts do not condemn you of wilful disobedience or infidelity, you may have confidence towards God, and proceed in the way of uprightness. Though the way be at present strait, though it be not strewn with flowers nor watered with comforts ; though you travel under cloud and behold not the sun nor the stars ; though it be not with you as in months past, when the candle of the Lord shined upon you ; *fear*
not

not, go on in the way of duty and submission, still trust in God, he will not suffer his faithfulness to fail, you shall yet have good cause to praise him. An affectionate mother loves not her child the less, that in due time she weans him from the breast, and perhaps makes it bitter to his taste : our heavenly Parent nourishes with *the breasts of consolation* * such as are babes in Christ ; but when they are advanced farther in the divine life, their meat and drink is to do their Father's will. Obedience may be difficult without outward honour or inward comfort ; it is the more disinterested and pure, the more acceptable to your heavenly Father. It is easy to shew regard to a friend by eating at his table, and rejoicing in his feasts, and partaking the communications of his love ; but friendship is better tried and ascertained by acts of self-denial. It is easy to follow Jesus and profess love, while he is multi-

* Isaiah lxvi. 7.

multiplying loaves and fishes, and turning water into wine ; but love and discipleship are better ascertained by receiving his hard sayings, and continuing with him in his temptation. Fear not, Christian, though the comforts of devotion be for a while withdrawn ; it is for the trial of your faith and love. Hold on in the way of duty and submission. In due time the day will dawn, and the day-star arise in your heart, and the shadows which now surround you will flee away.

S E R M O N

S E R M O N IV.

PROV. xiv. 10.

The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not with his joy.

FOR the truth of this I may appeal to your own experience.

Look back on the sources of joy and bitterness which open in early years.

Review the deep impressions that have since been made upon your heart. They are a succession of joys and sorrows, flowing from different sources at the different periods of life ; each in its turn sensibly and deeply felt.

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This review will correct the dictates of present feeling. If at present you be overwhelmed with sorrow, your mind dark, gloomy, ominous, repelling every pleasant thought; you are ready to deny those joys which are ascribed to the heart. If you be happy, you have forgotten your sorrows, and fondly imagine they will return no more.

Would you choose to live over again the part of your life which is past? Let me ask this question of you who now boast of unmixed joy. Would you become an infant of days, liable to pains and wants, unable to express them? Would you again undergo the discipline of childhood and youth? Could you bear the thought of suffering a second time, desire, disappointment, melancholy, remorse? The repetition of former joys were a poor compensation.

Is there any body with whom you would exchange circumstances? You wish perhaps

haps for the riches of one, for the health of another, for the good name of a third; but is there any one with whom you would exchange entirely? Let the man of sorrows put this question to himself.

These inquiries assist one to discern the truth of the proverb in his own case. *The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not with his joy.* The following observations will tend to shew that those joys and that bitterness are known to every human heart.

AFFECTIONS and passions are interwoven in our frame. Gratification is joyful, and disappointment bitter.

The distinguished virtues of a child give unutterable joy to parents, his misconduct and misery wound their spirits: in like manner a child is affected by the approbation or disapprobation of parents, by their happiness or distress, with sensations of joy or of bitterness to which his own heart a-

lone is conscious. In the intercourse of friends there is mutual confidence and complacence; a breach of friendship rends the heart. In love, there are amiable qualities and endearing actions known only to the lovers; there are things offensive and galling and full of bitterness, which to every body else seem things indifferent. From shame, improprieties trifling in themselves and but little regarded, make us blush, and the memory of them often renews our blushes.

THERE is in most minds some one passion stronger than the rest, which is of consequence a more copious source of joy and bitterness.

To the miser every new acquisition, and even prospects of gain, give joy; many are his pangs and fears, sleepless nights and hours of carefulness, to fence what he has got, and to repair his losses. Prospects of power and honour kindle an ambitious mind,

mind, check and disappointment throw damps upon it. A vain man feels satisfaction in the compliments however indirect, and flattery however gross, that are offered to him, the disapprobation and satire of every fool wring his heart. One whose ruling principle is benevolence has no small joy in the relief, the comfort, the happiness which are the fruits of it; and sometimes even that amiable principle is embittered by ingratitude.

THERE are interesting times when attention is turned inward, and fixed on the secret workings of the soul.

In youth we lay plans and form expectations of success and pleasure beyond the condition of humanity. There is a temporary joy in those delusive prospects; and bitter drops fall on the heart as we are gradually undeceived and disappointed.

When a young man steps forth into the world, he cannot help being anxious about his first appearance, about the character he is to have with his neighbours, with his own conscience, with almighty God; and it is meet that he should be anxious.

Affluence when attained banishes many disquieting thoughts. A sense of independence raises the mind above every thing mean, the path of honour may be trod, and kind affections cherished. You are conscious however that an independent fortune, or what you once looked upon as such, has not answered your expectations to the full. Imaginary wants, headstrong desires, and keen resentments disquiet the rich. From the summit of human happiness, you view the uncertainty of human things, and tremble. *This night thy soul may be required of thee.*

The bitterness of adversity needs not be told, but where is comfort? *When a rich man*

man falls he has many friends. A man is regarded and pitied in proportion to the character which he held, and the height from whence he has fallen. When an object so striking is presented to the rich as one of their own rank brought low by adversity, they are forward to relieve. It is humbling to accept of relief, but more so to be neglected.

Under irretrievable misfortune, it is some comfort to have the countenance of friends, and to meet with general sympathy. These sustain the mind under the first shock; and by the time that sympathy and attention have subdued, custom sustains it.

Misfortunes often come in a train, mutually rendering each other more sad and comfortless. The mind hardens itself in sorrow, finds comfort in pouring it out, and in the hope of better days.

When the bitterness of death approaches, the sympathy of friends is exquisite, and the feelings of devotion are a balance to those of nature. In the last agony, death itself is longed for, and beheld with desperate joy.

FROM the day we are born to the day we die, there is an invariable inseparable mixture of pain and pleasure. *A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered, she remembreth no more her sorrow, for joy that a man child is born.* When you finish a laborious work, or recover from disease, or escape an imminent danger which filled you with fearful apprehensions, there are few moments of your life more joyful. Joy, when it rises to excess, evaporates; excessive mirth leaves you spiritless, *even in the midst of laughter the heart is sorrowful.* At parting with friends, the thought of being separated from the endearments
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of friendship, perhaps for ever, sinks the heart; there is a satisfaction too in discovering the latent affection of those whom we love, and in the hope of being remembered. Abroad one is presented with the pleasures of imagination; but he finds that a particular frame of mind, easily discomposed, is necessary for enjoying them. At meeting with our friends again, ancient affection rekindles in the heart with a pleasing warmth, and scarcely have we yielded to joy, when the remembrance awakes of some mutual friend with whom we shall meet no more. The memory of joys that are past is pleasing and mournful, the memory of sorrows that are past mournful and pleasant. The prospect of future joy is obscured by the intervening period, and so is the prospect of future affliction.

CONSCIENCE gives bitterness which the heart only knows, and joy with which a stranger doth not intermeddle.

Remorse

Remorse is the cup of wrath without mixture, the wormwood and the gall. It taints innocence, and annihilates guilty pleasure.

An approving conscience adds pleasure to every act of piety, benevolence, and self denial; nor is it only in the immediate acts of virtue that we feel the influence of an approving conscience; we feel it through the whole of life, inspiring serenity, brightening every gloomy hour, disarming adversity, disease, and death, giving a relish to innocent pleasure, and raising the mind to pleasures for which we could otherwise have no relish. *If our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God,*

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THE SECOND PART.

LET us now inquire into the designs of Providence in that bitterness which the heart only knows, and those joys with which a stranger doth not intermeddle. I shall mention such as are obvious and practical, as point out at once the wisdom of God and the path of our duty.

IN a state of trial it requires attention to act well. Feelings known only to our selves command attention. While my happiness and misery depend in a great measure upon others, I do as they desire me. When in the progress of the mind joys and sorrows spring up known only to mine own heart, I brood over them in secret and consider what they mean. Finding a law in
my

my mind enforced by rewards and punishments, I resolve to obey it. When others would drag me into a course which that law condemns; I will resist, and be guided by the feelings of mine own heart. I now perceive the difference betwixt being thought happy and being really so. Applause may dazzle the mind, but self approbation is essential to happiness: it may be enjoyed in the obscurest station: obscurity and even reproach are supportable when suffered for conscience sake. Thus our inward joys and sorrows have a tendency to make us recollect ourselves, and regulate our conduct with a view to the most substantial and lasting good.

Here let me put you in mind, with regard to this and the following observations, and every observation of final causes; that they may be just and well founded though they do not hold in every case. Though many be thoughtless and inconsiderate, their secret bitterness and joy notwithstanding,

yet if those feelings have a tendency to make us think, to correct our prejudices, and to direct us to solid joy, it is a presumption that such were the designs of Providence.

ATTENTION to the joy and bitterness of the heart assists us in forming just notions of human life. It brings down high hopes of unmixed joy, and moderates our excessive fear of the evils that may befall us; it suggests what we may reasonably lay our account with both of happiness and misery in this life. In vain would you persuade the young, who wanton all their hours in frolic and gaiety, and who think *to-morrow shall be as this day and more abundant*; that the scene will change, that their minds ere long will bend to care, that they shall one day taste of sorrow: in vain do you preach the example of others who were once as gay and frolicsome, and as little suspicious of a change. They must learn
from

from their own proper experience, be tired of frivolous pursuits, disappointed in sanguine hopes, and meet with perplexity where they did not expect it; their own wisdom and fortitude must be put to the trial: nor is it enough to have met with these things, we must consider and reason upon them; and judge of our future life from what has already befallen us. In so doing we are gradually delivered from the froth and petulance of youth, from extravagant projects and unmanly fears; we assume a steadiness of temper; we know the best and the worst, and are prepared.

By knowing the bitterness and joys of the heart and their several sources in human nature, we are enabled to think justly of others, to correct opinions that are founded on superficial circumstances by a view of what passes within. To think justly of others is of use in conversation and in every kind of social intercourse: its
most

most important uses are to prevent us on the one hand from envying, and on the other from despising our neighbour, to reconcile and attach us to our own condition.

You may be ready upon first thought to envy those whose time is at their own disposal. But they are often reduced to trivial pastimes, and to the languor of inaction. Slander, gaming, drunkenness, and wantonness are called in by turns. These pleasures diminish by repetition. The conscious mind is fretted in the midst of them.

Do you envy a neighbour who is raised from his own to a higher sphere, who frequents the company of great men and receives visits from them? But you know none of the inward perplexities in altering one's sphere of life, you know not the anxieties and mortifications in retaining favour, how many ways he debases himself, how often he gives up practices and opi-
nions

nions which he once held sacred, and what remorse he suffers.

Are you who live at ease in your possessions ready to despise a poor man, because he labours, and fares ill, and is excluded from the honours of this life? But he aspires to glory and virtue: he earns bread by honest labour, daily blesses God, and submits to his will without murmuring. Cease to despise him, pity his hardships, respect his virtue.

It is meet that the hardships we perceive in the condition of others both above and below us should reconcile us to our own. We find that it is easier for us to bear our own than any other, that there is a fitness in the proportion of joy and bitterness assigned to each, that there is all the reason which can be for contentment in such a state as the present.

THE

The bitterness and joy of the heart are bonds of natural affection and of friendship.

Parents hear with undissembled concern whatever lies heavy on the minds of their children, and enter into their secret joys. The alleviation of grief and enhancement of joy by communion, are bonds of reciprocal affection.

When you have access to an intimate friend, you can more easily conceal your doubt and perplexities from every body else. You can check the overflowings of joy, which vanity perhaps has swelled to the brim. A friend will hear with pleasure our real merit; he will allow for your self partiality, and advise you in the spirit of meekness.

The confidential intercourse of friendship is salutary and soothing. When discontent, an extravagant project, or consci-

ous folly, hang upon the mind, they fret and rankle it, till we can prevail on ourselves to disclose the matter: the very disclosing it takes off part of the weight, and often the sympathy, advice, and good humour of a friend, are sufficient to remove it. In the presence of one to whom we can impart sorrow and give way to tears, the heart is eased.

THERE are feelings, both sweet and bitter, too strong for utterance. These lead to devotion.

When the shadow of death is changed into the morning; the heart feels joy unutterable, ascends in holy gratitude, and communicates with the fountain of joy. On the other hand, when the soul is cast down, when neighbours are prejudiced against us and we have no friend, when our complaint is unutterable—to whom can we go but unto God, who knows the heart,
and

and will not despise the prayer of the destitute? If there be consolation in disburdening our minds to a friend or father, it is unmixed and full in pouring out the heart before our Father in heaven. He upbraideth not. He changeth not. His mercies endure for ever, they are upon them that fear him.

ON the whole, you have heard the bitterness and joy of the heart illustrated in the passions of our nature, in the changes of fortune to which we are liable, and in the operation of conscience. You have heard how these secret joys and sorrows have a tendency to make us think, and form just notions of human life both in ourselves and in others; how they become bonds of friendship and natural affection; and when deeper and more serious, lead the mind to God.

S E R M O N V.

Gal. v. 21. DRUNKENNESS.

THERE are intimations in our constitution of the evil of drunkenness. These co-operate with a sense of duty in recommending and enforcing sobriety.

Let us inquire whence it is that so many, notwithstanding these intimations, do violence to themselves; and how the evil may be remedied.

The young are ashamed to refuse, and do violence to themselves that they may
comply

comply with others. Let such withdraw for a little, and think. Self-preservation is the first law of your nature. It is manly to preserve inviolate the faculties of a man. It is false shame to be ashamed of virtue. Your own heart condemns the irresolute mean compliance. In the bitterness of remorse, you resolve to defy the fashion and ridicule of the world, to defy every temptation.

The dictates of remorse are not of themselves sufficient. It may abate before temptation returns. Weigh the resolution you have taken, calmly and attentively.

Attend to the power of habit. Though you have an aversion at present, habit may overcome it. Love contracted to what was at first disagreeable is often the most violent. The love of strong drink, though seldom or never contracted without preceding aversion, at last prevails against natural and moral obligations. Every act of

drunkenness is a step toward that desperate state.

The progress indeed is imperceptible, and the effect of a single act so comparatively small as to lay a foundation for self-deceit. An extensive view will undeceive you. Look back on the years of innocence and virtuous sensibility ; did you not then think it impossible for any temptation to carry you the length you have already gone, to which you proceeded by degrees, and over the enormity of which custom has thrown a veil ? Look on the unhappy man who is chained to intemperance ; the time was when he thought himself incapable of that ignoble servitude.

This shews the danger of yielding even in one instance, and the fallacy of those arguments by which you are solicited to indulge for once. The arguments, even upon the principle of those who use them,
are

are absurd. Is it not absurd to express joy for the birth of an heir, for the marriage of a daughter, for the return of a friend, for another year added to life, for victory ; by incapacitating the mind for joy ?

Habit enfeebles your power of resisting. For every time you comply with drunken companions, it is a degree the harder for you to resist. The progress of habit, in this view, may be illustrated by what happens in a single act of drunkenness, where you see in miniature the more general and effectual progress of habit. A sober-minded young man is in the first instance averse, nor is it without many arguments and much intreaty, and some degree of force, that he is drawn. As he listens and yields and smother his reluctance, reason and conscience gradually forsake him. He comes to relish the sophistry and songs of the drunkard. He finds in them an apology for excess. His sense of propriety is suf-

spended. *His eyes behold strange women,
and his heart utters perverse things.*

THE temptations to be met with from companions deserye particular attention when you resolve against intemperance. There is a malignity in vice which prompts the guilty to envy and corrupt the pleasures of the virtuous. This is no where more remarkable than in drunkenness, because companions are in some sort necessary. While remorse is felt, it is a consolation to have partners in guilt ; and when ebriety suspends remorse, partners enhance the giddy joy. They even think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, nor yield to arguments which appear so good to their distempered reason.

TAKE

TAKE a view of those arguments that they may not surprize you unaware.

THE first and strongest is, that drinking is social. The effect of drink upon the social feelings is not to be denied ; and so long as it takes place without impairing health or reason, without wasting your time or hurting your circumstances, without unbridling the tongue, or exposing you to any temptation ; it is not condemned. Through many ways does the social tendency of drinking mislead young men. If a little wine comforts and cheers the heart, and calls forth social affections, they are ready to conclude that much wine will do so in a higher degree. Intoxication has fits of excessive fondness which seem to favour their conclusion.

The affection which wine excites is transitory. When the turbulence of blood and
spirits

spirits has subsided, the love and courage and open heartedness subside apace. If any one imagines that the impression may remain and be of use, he needs only to reflect, that excessive drinking is followed by self-condemnation, and he who is out of humour with himself can hardly retain his affection for others. If a faint impression did remain, its most probable effect would be the repetition of guilt.

How melancholy is it to reflect, that your mutual love depends, for its exercise and continuance, on the troubling of the spirits; that separation, disease, or poverty may dissolve it! Shall we account that love virtuous and praise-worthy which can only be had in wine, which is confined to the riotous, which shrinks at the appearance of distress and poverty; distress and poverty which nourish virtuous love?

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The genuine fruits of love are sympathy, advice, reproof, and aid. Which of them are yielded by the friendship of drunkards? They seldom pretend to any but the last, and dignify squandering with the name of generosity. Instances of real generosity among them are rare. Mark the unhappy victim to intemperance, and behold his latter end.—In poverty forsaken, and in death forgotten.

They waste what would enable them to be generous. Purchasing costly liquors to intoxicate themselves and others is their open-heartedness. It is parting with money indeed; but after you have parted with all, there is not one reflection that favours of comfort; no eye to pity you, no heart to bless you, no prayer of the poor, the fatherless, the afflicted, in your behalf; there is no soundness within you.

REVIEW the argument. Judge if that affection is to be rated high which is raised by such exceptionable means, which rises upon the ruins of reason, which is banished by remorse, which never returns but with temperance, which is bestowed only on fellow-drunkards, and withdrawn in the day of their calamity.

It is fashionable to drink freely. This is another argument by which drunkenness is recommended, and it comes with weight upon the shame-faced. Pleasure they could resist, but they cannot bear to be remarked as singular. After repelling other weak arguments they often yield to this.

The empire of fashion is over things indifferent. When it invades morality we ought to resist. Difficulties in resisting are trials of virtue. We must assume a firmness which will be termed obstinate.

Avoid

Avoid the companions whom you cannot resist. Whatever advantages and pleasures you forego, they are far inferior to health and innocence. Sober companions may be found. It is no loss for a young man to be sometimes alone, exercising and improving his reason.

I have gone on the supposition that intemperance is fashionable ; and if it be so in some degree, if our country be infamous for this vice among the nations, let young men be sober-minded, and wipe away the reproach.

The fashion however is by no means general. The bulk of respectable and distinguished men are and must be sober. Let those who are under the power of shame attend to this. There are patterns of sobriety every way eminent. Good example has more influence than bad upon a heart not yet corrupted, for virtue has an advo-

cate there which recommends and endears the pattern. Bad example may drag the timid mind along, but it drags a reluctant victim.

DRINKING, they alledge, introduces you to the knowledge of life and of the world. It is an odd use of words, but they mean the knowledge of extravagance and riot.

Knowledge is valuable, and to be desired on account of its useful tendency. The only good tendency this can be supposed to have, is to raise horror at such dishonourable prostitution of human nature. This is not their meaning. If it were, it is yet to be considered that the knowledge of evil may make one think more highly of himself than he ought to think, and less fearfully of sin. Let us suppose a man acquainted with the ways of drunkenness on the one hand, and on the other a man ignorant

norant of those ways. The ignorant man, if he sees a single act of drunkenness, is astonished ; is shocked at an abuse of mercies, and the degradation of reason ; melts into prayer for such a miserable offender, that this sin may be forgiven him, that he be not hurried into eternity in that ungracious state. The man of knowledge smiles at his simplicity, and triumphs in his own superior knowledge of the world.

THE pretensions of drunkenness to social affection, fashion, knowledge of the world, and other pretensions of the like nature, lay a foundation for vanity. This is a new temptation to the simple. They may fall in with companions guided by such a vanity, who have departed from the natural sentiments of right and wrong, and established for themselves an inverted system of morals ; looking upon themselves as the men, and looking down upon children of the

the light and of the day ; preferring darkness to light, and calling evil good. According to them a profusion of liquors is liberality, and moderation avarice, to intoxicate your guests is to be hospitable, to drink much and to tarry long at the wine are objects of ambition, extravagant frolics are feats of renown.—

To mention is to expose this system. It betrays ignorance of the world, ignorance of the present condition of man and his proper business upon earth. It renders an involuntary homage to virtue by grasping her shadow and her name, but unhappily fixes the attention and zeal of its votaries on the name and shadow. When a young man imagines that he can gain applause, be accounted social and fashionable, and acquire the knowledge of the world, at so easy a rate ; there is the utmost risk that his ambition be drowned in intemperance, that he be forever lost.

THE

THE last plea for drunkenness is this. *Drink, for there is no danger, there are none here but honest men.* This argument as well as the others has an appearance of reason. It is taking up a maxim of prudence and extending it too far ; as if knowing one's company were every thing. Secrecy can never give sanction to immorality. Whatever conduct you are anxious to conceal is at best suspicious. The argument at any rate is deceitful. With whom is the secret of your excess intrusted ? Is it not with drunkards ? But they are honest you say, and faithful. Allowing them to be so, are there not times when they quit the government of themselves, when their faith and honesty will not avail ? Your shame may be discovered by servants, and it is humbling to have your reputation at their mercy. Drunkenness is liable in many ways to discover itself, by *the noise of babblings and contention, staggering by the way, woe and sorrow, redness of eyes, wounds without a cause.* Though you should escape the eye

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and knowledge of men, your ways are still before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all your goings.

I HAVE now pointed out the most delusive arguments in favour of drunkenness, that in your resolutions against it you may be aware of them. I have a further view in considering those arguments so minutely—to undeceive if possible some of those who use them and are themselves deceived.

Of one thing more it is fit to warn you, that plots are sometimes laid for intoxicating the sober. The victims marked out for those ungenerous frolics are simple modest timorous young men; who decline every excess, who love their innocence, and are apt to boast of it.

If those who lay such plots be not past feeling, I would desire them to think what they

they are doing. Where is the mirth in intoxicating a fellow creature, in pushing him on to sickness and madness and remorse? The man who can find sport in this is lost to humanity. Make the case your own, or rather make it the case of a temperate friend whom you love. Suppose you saw him betrayed into excess, his remonstrances and anguish laughed to scorn, would you not condemn and resent such treatment of your friend?

Guilt is incurred by causing another to sin. It is introducing him, it is forcing him into a world of iniquity, and bringing the guilt of it on your own head. *Wo to him that giveth his neighbour strong drink, that holdeth the bottle to his head, to make him drunken.*

LET the young remember that success and reputation in the world depend to a considerable degree on sobriety. Young

men who set out with talents and applause and fair prospects of success, ruin all by intemperance ; some are cut off in the midst of their years, the rest drop into insignificance and premature old age. Young men who set out with fewer advantages become useful and respectable by sober industry.

SOME fall into the sin of drunkenness after living soberly long. They are warnings to those who stand to take heed lest they fall.

When a man of rank is a drunkard, one hopes for his favour by drinking with him, to another the vanity of being with him is a temptation. The favour is deceitful, and the vanity contemptible.

Politics often prove a snare. The passions excited at an election darken the moral sense. They who were admired in youth for riotous mirth now claim merit with

with their party and obtain it, for making drunkenness an engine of deceit.

In doing business and driving bargains temperance may be ensnared. The affairs of the world must go on, but it is the common interest of honest men to avoid intemperance in transacting them : their judgment is clearer, and the profit usually larger, when they transact with sobriety. If a case should happen where a profitable bargain cannot be made without intoxication, it is doubtless one of those cases where worldly interest should be sacrificed to virtue.

One may be tempted under disappointments to seek comfort in strong drink. The temptation is powerful, and we feel compassion for those who yield. A Christian considers disappointments and sad accidents as trials of fortitude, rejects the mingled evanescent pleasures of sin, and o-

pens his heart to the pure consolations of piety.

If women fall into drunkenness it is generally at a late period of life. Young women are not in the least degree exposed to the temptations described in the former part of this discourse. While young men are seduced by fashion, by companions, and by many flattering though deceitful prospects ; young women are engaged by fashion, by reputation, by all their hopes of respect and comfort, to severe temperance. In the progress of life they also are subject to disappointments and sad accidents. They may be tempted to the dreadful expedient of drowning the remembrance of their misery. It is abandoning character, frustrating the end of affliction, and plunging into an abyss from whence it is next to impossible to rise again.

HABITUAL

HABITUAL drunkards seldom reform. They proceed through bad report, and poverty, and pain; unmoved by the distress of their family or by their own. In them Providence gives warning that an evil habit can hardly be reformed; that a reasonable creature may so far degrade himself, and make such a decided choice of guilty pleasure, as to be almost without hope.

S E R M O N VI.

JAMES iv. 11.

Speak not evil one of another.

WERE you to reflect, at the instant you are speaking ill of one, that this may hurt his interest with those who intend to serve him, that it may alienate the affection of one whom he loves, and separate his very friend, that it will be bitter to his heart, your's would probably relent. We are often led inadvertently into evil speaking, through ways that we are not aware of. I shall point out some of them.

THE first is ignorance. It betrays the young into evil speaking. Before they begin

begin to act, and to know difficulties which experience alone can teach, they form romantic ideas of excellence, rise in their own imagination to that ideal standard, apply it to those who are at present in active life, and rashly censure them. The censures of the unmarried are become a proverb. Sauntering insignificant people, who have no profession and who know nothing, are most censorious.

The young reproach those who are overtaken in faults, and insult over fallen innocence. They have not as yet felt the power of passion, they know not how much human innocence depends on the absence of temptation, experience has not yet taught them that their own hearts are deceitful.

There is a tendency to flight opinions we are not acquainted with. Sects who have peculiar opinions in religion, and who aim at uncommon strictness of manners,

ners, are often reviled as fanatics or hypocrites, by such as do not understand their opinions, and are not so strict. They who consider their own manner of believing as essential to salvation, who know no system but their own, and will hear no other; are very apt to think and speak uncharitably. I have heard such persons assigning to damnation the excellent ones of the earth. They would indeed lament (for benevolence and reason are not easily suppressed) they would lament that such innocence and so much goodness should be of no avail, they would think it unaccountable, and then conclude, ' Their virtues may ' be of use to society, though of none to ' themselves. Grace is free; but they can ' never go to heaven with such erroneous principles; ' that is, with principles so different from your's. And what can you say worse of a man, what can you conceive worse, than that he is unfit for heaven? *Judge not, that ye be not judged.*

Through

Through ignorance the rich and the poor speak evil one of another.

The rich seldom know the real characters of the poor. They see them but in a few, and these perhaps the most unfavourable lights. They cannot easily conceive the despondence into which extreme poverty sinks the heart, nor the force with which oppression drives poor men to injustice. They overlook the virtues of a poor man in his cottage; industry, contentment, self-denial, fortitude under want and oppression, resignation in lingering disease, in the absence of every earthly comfort, in the valley of the shadow of death.

The poor in like manner have seldom access to know the real characters of the rich. They are not judges of the conduct proper for a high station; they cannot estimate the excellencies, nor make allowance for the temptations. Plans for establishing

blishing order, for suppressing theft, and for exciting industry, though wise in themselves, are disliked by the poor. They often put the worst construction on every thing done or said by the rich, and return railing for railing.

THE LOVE OF MONEY is a source of evil speaking. One who has lost money by the iniquity of another, opens his mouth against him. In this case, it is taking from a fraudulent bankrupt the good name which he has forfeited, and announcing his real character. There are cases less justifiable. Persons of the same profession, whose pecuniary interests interfere, throw out reflections against one another. Officers of the revenue are evil spoken of on account of their office, even when they are men whom the neighbourhood would otherwise love and speak well of. Ministers of religion, though blameless, are evil spoken of by those who pay them.

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The poor are railed at by those who pay a tax for their maintenance. Misers speak ill of the needy, even of their needy friends, if it be proposed to relieve them. *I have neither lent on usury, says the prophet, nor have men lent to me on usury, yet every one doth curse me.* It intimates, that borrowing and lending on usury occasions evil speaking of the harshest kind, and warns those who have such transactions to keep in their tongue with a bridle:

WE may be led through IDLENESS to speak evil one of another. Idle people who converse much exhaust their innocent subjects, and having still a desire to speak fall into evil speaking. It gratifies malevolent affections, and there are few minds where these have been utterly subdued. Events occur from time to time which excite the talkativeness of the idle: one of good character falls into temptation, they rake up his former frailties, and help to throw

throw him down: suspicions arise against an innocent man, they spread and kindle them: a servant is dismissed abruptly without any reason assigned, and they assign malicious ones: an infant child is exposed, they scatter among characters the most innocent and pure, firebrands, arrows, and death. In a cluster of neighbours, rivalships spring up in respect of connections, personal endowments, or external shew; these petty rivalships produce idle censure. Affronts and slight injuries provoke the idle and talkative to the strife of tongues. Party-spirit is readily imbibed by empty minds; it blinds and inflames, and so fits them for spreading evil reports of the opposite party; *they say* is the preface to their slander.

Idle people who are much together talk on and on of every thing, tell one another all they know; at last reveal the secret faults and imperfections of their friends—not without conscious hesitation and remonstrance. Allow me to second the remonstrance. Let it suffice that you have idled
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your time in unavailing discourse, that you have injured yourself; do not go on to injure your friend. He intrusted you in confidence; in the hope of secrecy and sympathy and comfort. Is it then for you to add bitterness to his affliction? Is it thus you requite the confidence of a friend? Is it thus you violate, is it thus you dissolve the sacred tie of friendship?

Whoever speaks ill of others from being idle, and wishes to reform, must endeavour to check that idle turn; to curtail those long frequent heedless interviews, where all the pride and folly and malice of your hearts boil over. Such as have contracted inveterate habits of idleness and talkativeness will find it difficult, perhaps impossible, wholly to reform. Let them at least resolve to be cautious in drawing characters, to be particularly on their guard where there is any ground of resentment or envy, and to check a prying inclination to know the faults of others
let

let them resolve to talk upon indifferent subjects, to extend their acquaintance with such as are useful and innocently amusing, and to cultivate a taste for religious and moral conversation, which might sweeten their imagination, and wean the heart from calumny.

WIT may lead to evil speaking.

One who has wit may be so enamoured of it, so captivated with the attention, the praise, and the courtship it procures him, that he cannot allow himself to moderate or correct it; he goes on indulging it in that train which takes best and raises the loudest laugh. He is perhaps defective in more material accomplishments, and tinged with envy. His ill natured jokes are relished by the malevolent and self-conceited. Hence much scandal is uttered in the form of wit. Much of that which may seem innocent is not so. The moment

ment one is held forth in a ridiculous point of view, his estimation sinks. Wit embitters an evil report, and is a mean of spreading it. Thoughtless people spread it for the sake of a laugh.

One of the first liberties which the witty assume, when they give way to evil speaking, is to break in on the limits of truth. They often find this necessary to make their story palatable. The mirth which it excites reconciles them to the impropriety of it, or rather diverts them from thinking it at all improper. The most of us are too apt to fall in with this ; to consider the wit of a story that is false, and the mirth which it occasions, as an apology for its falsehood ; forgetting that truth is sacred, and that a good name is sacred.

Another liberty which they assume, in process of time, is to turn virtue itself into ridicule. They are happy to ridicule merit which they cannot attain, and

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which

which is a perpetual reproach. The modest and diffident, who are thus evil spoken of on account of their virtue, may be tempted to conceal or to abandon it.

It were easy to show how the witty who give way to evil speaking, are gradually betrayed into the worst kind of it, and how it produces the worst effects both on themselves and others. Every one against whom they employ their malicious wit becomes an enemy. Their passion for wit grows so violent that they sometimes sacrifice a friend to it. Even those who court, admire, and flatter a witty man, dare not trust him. His ill-natured affections get quite the better of the social and kind. That talent which at first made him known and sought, which heightened social enjoyment, and made him the general favourite, has now, by an unhappy abuse, estranged him from the genuine pleasures of society. He is now a melancholy proof,
that

that even in this life *judgements are prepared for the scorner.*

Persons of wit, who regard their own character and comfort, will carefully avoid this channel of evil speaking. It is not the way to be trusted; it is not the way to be honoured; it is not the way to be useful.

CHILDREN are sometimes permitted and even encouraged to make satyrical remarks, especially if there be a shadow of wit in them. Heedless parents join in the laugh, and think there can be no great harm in it. But it is not agreeable to be laughed at by children, nor do we love the parents who allow it. The government of the tongue is an essential branch of religious discipline, and should be taught early. Turn your children's attention from what is laughable in any human infirmity to

what is painful and humiliating, they will melt into compassion and sober thought.

Let children listen, for though I speak to parents it is concerning you. Fearful was the judgement on forty children who mocked at a symptom of old age in the prophet Elisha; a she bear from the Wilderness devoured them. Beware of mocking at age or disease or a disordered mind. We are all liable to age and disease; there are always some disordered in mind; and we know not who among us is predestinated to that last stage of human wretchedness.

PRIDE is another way by which some are betrayed into evil speaking.

They who allow themselves to be proud of wealth are led by the same impropriety of sentiment to think meanly of those who have none, and to pour contempt upon them. They sneer at poverty and the symptoms

symptoms of it, and at the shame-faced who attempt to conceal it. Put yourself a moment in the place of one that is poor. Feel but in imagination how bitter it is to be the object of contempt. Wealth and grandeur may flee away. They are given not to cherish pride but humanity.

Those who are proud of having power, or of knowing a great deal, think and speak contemptibly of their inferiors in these respects? not considering that such gifts are valuable only as they enable you to do good to your brethren, to instruct, to advise, to comfort, to protect them.

Pride tempts you to speak ill of inferiors through contempt, and of equals through envy. When an equal is likely to eclipse you in wealth, in popular applause, or whatever else you are proud of; envy springs up. Evil speaking feeds envy. Your censuring the conduct and performances of another, implies a secret persua-

sion that you yourselves would have done better. All who excel meet with censure as well as applause. That pride and envy are at bottom, appears from this fact; when the man of reputation dies the unjust censure ceases, he is no longer a rival; respect and regret succeed malevolence.

This, by the way, suggests a consideration that may be of use to evil speakers of every kind. Consider that he of whom you now speak evil, whose merit you envy, whose character you stain, whose low state you embitter with contempt; that he is to die. Suppose him dead. The uneasiness which you have given would recoil upon yourself, you would wish him alive again that you might make an atonement. Improve this meditation. He whom you have injured with your tongue is yet alive; it is yet in your power to withdraw the persecution of your tongue, and to make an atonement.

Whoever

Whoever wishes to cultivate the social affections will be very watchful against evil speaking, it blasts and withers them. You become interested to justify your bad opinion and your bad report. You withdraw friendship from the man whom you have slandered, and treat him with neglect and aversion. *The lying tongue hateth those that are injured thereby.*

If you do any one an injury, you speak evil of him as an apology for using him ill. By frequently repeating the evil report you at last believe it. By constantly fearing him, and by meeting with his just resentment, you come to hate him. Wrath kindles wrath. *The beginning of strife is as the letting out of water*; there is no saying what length the animosity and feuds may run.

You might turn the current of conversation into the opposite course by doing good. If you assist one in subduing an e-

vil habit and in getting the better of foibles, you will be careful to conceal them. If you assist him in acquiring any useful art, or in entering upon business, you will recommend and support him. Be kind and beneficent to the utmost of your power, and wish well to all; then you will look on men as brethern, entitled to your charitable opinion and your good word.

Beneficence gives a mighty check to evil speaking. It stops short those general complaints against all mankind which the destitute and forlorn sometimes utter, reviving benevolence where it was ready to expire. The character of a benefactor is viewed with a friendly eye. One who has met with discreet usage, and received favours, is not ashamed to confess this effect of them: We often hear such expressions as these; 'What his faults are he knows himself, he is always discreet to me, I am much indebted to him, it does not become me to say any thing to his disadvantage.'

'disadvantage.' *Charity covereth a multitude of sins.*

OUR own secret guilt often prompts evil suspicions and evil speaking. When one is conscious of faults which are not laid to his charge, of vain sensual and worldly thoughts which he would blush to own, and of unworthy motives influencing parts of his conduct which are reckoned good; he suspects the secret sentiments and conduct of others to be as bad as his own.

It has been observed that people are aptest to censure in others the vices to which they themselves are most addicted. One is best acquainted with the violence of passion, the influence of custom, and the nature of temptation, in the sin that most easily besets himself. When the slightest symptom of it appears in another, he can easily conceive the rest; and make up the censure very fully, perhaps not altogether unjustly

unjustly from his own experience. The more vices men are tainted with, they are the more uncharitable in their opinions and discourse. The disingenuous cannot think that their neighbours are sincere, the unchaste will hardly admit the existence of chastity, and the selfish who have extinguished every liberal and generous sentiment in their own minds, insist upon it, that there is no such thing as disinterested benevolence. Evil speaking springs from almost every other vice, and it will never be checked effectually while the root remains.

Though the consciousness of evil habits betrays into evil speaking, yet the reforming of these does not always reform it. There are some who have partly amended their lives, who seem to be religious and even to have a zeal for religion, who are nevertheless censorious. Let such reflect how dangerous it is to offend in one point, and how vain that man's religion is who bridleth not his tongue.

S E R M O N

S E R M O N VII.

Gal. v. 26.

Let us not be desirous of vain-glory; provoking one another, envying one another.

WE may consider the nature of vain-glory; the temptations to it; how it discovers itself; its bad effects upon ourselves and others; and how to avoid it.

Vain-glory implies a disposition to value ourselves, and to expect admiration from others for things of no real worth. The satisfaction which one feels in thinking well of himself, the pleasure in gaining notice from others, and the number of trifling circumstances by which that notice may be

be gained, lay a wide foundation for vain-glory.

They who have little or no merit are most liable to it. Fond of distinction and unable to distinguish themselves by real worth, they make a shew of external accidental possessions, such as wealth or titles : These secure the admiration of servants and dependants, and of all who are weak enough to annex merit to grandeur.

People who have no grandeur are sometimes contented to be vain of their relation to it ; to value themselves for their connection with men of interest and importance, with men of wealth or honour, with characters any way conspicuous. This sort of vain-glory operates upon weak minds in every sphere of life, it betrays them into many lies, they magnify the wealth and credit of their friends, pretend to a greater connection and intimacy than they really have, and found unreasonable expectations

tions on that supposed intimacy ; they impose on others and on themselves.

The resting one's character and importance on the merit of another is mean ; it extinguishes activity and enterprize, it prevents the efforts of genius. What can be expected from one who is continually talking of relations and friends ; who rests satisfied that they will provide for him ; who thinks it honour sufficient to be connected with titles, to be allied to greatness ? Is this the path of glory ? Is this the ambition of a man ?

It is particularly unfortunate when ideas of this kind prevail in youth. A young person who happens to be distinguished by birth independent of his own merit, is buoyed up to arrogance and petulance : The mean-spirited envy, and the wise pity him. They who are less fortunatediscover symptoms of vain glory yet more pitiful. For the sake of keeping company with the wealthy,

wealthy, the titled, the well dressed ; they keep company with children, with fools, with the extravagant, with the licentious, with the profane. Think what a sacrifice you make to vanity ;—time, morals, friendship.

Vain-glory gives a wrong bias to the passion for being distinguished, a passion which determines our future character and importance in life, which is nevertheless so strong and so blind in youth, it grasps at almost any object. Many can recollect projects for distinguishing themselves which they once entered into with great keenness, and of which they are now ashamed.

The time and talents of youth fall a prey to vain-glory in many ways. It stirs up a restlessness and discontent with their profession and way of life. It leads them in quest of trivial and useless accomplishments ; one they will acquire, because it is genteel ; another

another because it may recommend them to the great ; a third that they may be able to speak of it among those who know it not ; and several others that they may know something of every thing. From such motives they waste the season of youth upon studies and accomplishments for which they will have no occasion ; to the neglect of their own profession which it is every one's duty to be well acquainted with, and for ignorance in which no other accomplishments can atone.

They are sometimes influenced by vain-glory in the choice of their profession. Instead of chusing one from its being suited to their genius, from the probability of understanding it well and of being useful, they often adopt one because of the figure and rank which it gives. If they themselves be scrupulous about acting from such a motive, they nevertheless suffer themselves to be prompted not only to adopt the profession, but to enter upon it sooner

sooner than they ought, and to become more conspicuous than they could wish, through the vain-glory of an ambitious friend.

When one who has entered upon a profession from such motives, begins to think of his own unfitness, and of the light in which he must appear to people of sense, the thought mortifies him. He endeavours to dismiss the mortifying thought, and to please himself with the appendages of his profession among such as will attend to them. These however become known to all, and familiar to himself, and no longer excite attention. Unable to attract notice, or to comfort himself in the want of it, ready to be neglected and forgotten, he has recourse to the first effect of vain-glory mentioned in the text, *provoking*. Rather than be utterly disregarded he sets himself to contradict and provoke people. It gives him an imaginary importance to impugn characters and doctrines which are reckon-

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ed important, and he draws attention while he gives offence. He indulges the spirit of contradiction without controul; he departs from his own opinion, he departs from truth, he departs from innocence, to indulge it.

The effects of vain-glory through this channel are deplorable. They who are strangers to the world which lieth in wickedness will think it incredible ; but many know, and the consciences of some bear witness, that there is such a thing as being vain of swearing, of Sabbath-breaking, of unlawful love, of disease, of infidelity. The vain-glory in these cases appears from their often repeating the story of their guilt to the very wicked who value them for it, and to the well disposed who are shocked at it; from magnifying their vices wherever they may excite horror or envy, from gratifying their irregular passions, not in the way most agreeable to the passion, but the way best adapted to vain-glory; from

their boasting of exploits which they never performed, and of wickedness which they could not for their hearts have committed.

There is an advice of the Psalmist very fit for serious people who have occasion to hear such boasters, *Fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.* Fret not yourself. It can do no good. When such a one blasphemes the doctrines and institutions of Christ, he is to be pitied indeed, but it is for the honour of Christianity to have such enemies. By giving way to fretfulness and envy you gratify and feed vain glory; inadvertently indeed, but not the less certainly. They are encouraged by inquiries and admiration on the one hand, by impatience and resentment on the other, to recite and magnify their vices. It is meet to check that fretfulness which they are so happy to excite, and to avoid encouraging in any way their misguided vanity.

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Let parents, and such as have influence upon youth, give a proper bias to the love of glory. Encourage and praise them only for what is praise-worthy. Suggest proper thoughts of wealth, personal beauty, and other things which do not depend on themselves. Draw off their admiration sometimes from the distinctions of dress, food, and toys: Accustom them rather to value themselves for obedience, activity, self-denial, and compassion.

Let the young themselves be on their guard. In youth there are strong temptations to vain-glory, but there are likewise feelings which tend to counter-work it. Conscious ignorance, a lively sense of shame, respect for old age and for established maxims, tend to restrain the expressions of vain-glory.

Direct your love of glory upon objects worthy of real honour. Your own consciences, the word of God, and serious reflection

lection upon human affairs will suggest them.

When the mind is set on some great object it becomes indifferent to lesser matters. You lose relish for useless accomplishments, and for the borrowed lustre of a splendid connection : Your self importance, in consequence of wealth, titles, or honourable office, abates : If any of these be your lot, you obtain the honour which is due to them, and possess the influence which they give, the more that you do not value yourselves for them, nor force attention to them.

By fixing on what is praise-worthy and persevering in it, you insure to yourself a just and lasting esteem ; or if in some rare instance that should not take place for a little, you still insure inward satisfaction. It is the Apostle's advice in the context, *Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself, and*

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not in another. A good mark is here suggested, by which to distinguish the object of ambition. If the only joy which it yields be reflected from the opinions of others, and lost in retirement; it is probably ill directed. Have you a beautiful house and fields? Is your person beautiful? And is not the pleasure which these yield mostly derived from the sentiments they excite in others? Compare this with industry in your profession, constancy in friendship, rigid honesty. These challenge and obtain esteem, they afford inward pleasure independent of that esteem.

The inward pleasure of conscious merit takes away much of that restlessness and solicitude to obtain applause, and to purchase it at any rate, which is inseparable from vain glory.

The fixing on worthy objects, and making progress, tends to prevent that other effect of vain-glory mentioned in the text,

envy. One who is conscious of some degree of merit, and meets with the approbation due to it, can the more frankly allow the same to others: He considers merit of every kind as intitled to approbation, and is as willing to bestow as to receive it. One, on the other hand, who is conscious of demerit, who receives but a scanty applause, and does not deserve even that, grudges that others should be more worthy, he cannot allow himself to think so, he is apt to conceal their merit and even to fally their fame.

In so many ways does a praise-worthy object of ambition tend to prevent vain-glory. It carries off the mind from any anxious concern about lesser matters, it lays a foundation for real honour, it yields an inward satisfaction which soothes the mind under unmerited disgrace, it makes us less anxious in soliciting applause, it tends to root out envy the concomitant of vain-glory.

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The rule, if properly applied, will produce these effects in some degree. There is considerable difficulty in applying it. The danger is lest our ambition go out after the praise of virtue, not after virtue itself. This leads to hypocrisy and self-deceit, and cuts off the recompense of reward. *Take heed that ye do not your good works before men, to be seen of men, otherwise ye shall have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.*

We sometimes meet with people who profess the most abject sentiments of themselves and of their own deserts; "they are transgressors in every point, there is no good thing in them"; while yet we can discover, from the manner of these professions, from their uneasiness if any body believes or seems to believe them, from the more private and unguarded openings of their hearts, that vain-glory is in fact at bottom. Nor is this expression of vain-glory so unaccountable as it may seem at

first fight. Humility and lowliness of mind are recommended in the most express manner by Christ; they are dictated by the condition of human nature; to attain these sentiments, and think of ourselves as we ought to think, is no common pitch of virtue; they who really attain it are esteemed and honoured, they are honoured without grudge or envy. This honour and esteem, so liberally bestowed upon the humble, captivates the vain-glorious; they grasp at the praise of humility without the preparatory discipline. Hence they are betrayed into professions and sentiments which seem so inconsistent.

The operation of self-deceit in this matter is worth attending to. Frequent professions of humility, and some imperfect acts of it, ward off any suspicion of deceit. They pretend to be worse than they really are: while they would inwardly do justice to themselves, the selfish principle has room to operate, and they become in their own
imagination

imagination a great deal better. They compare themselves with those who pretend to more with a worse title. They complain, to those who will listen, of coldness and deadness and small attainments, without once suspecting so unlikely a method of courting commendation.

I now go on to observe, that a well-directed ambition, though it tends to overcome vain-glory, is not of itself sufficient. They who are fired with a just ambition and possessed of real merit are sometimes too fond of having it known. Concerning such it may be observed, that they have small excuse for soliciting what they may pretty certainly depend upon, and what they can do without. The betraying vanity diminishes that attention which is otherwise due to their merit. Those of inferior worth are glad of that slur on your character; they spread it as far as your fame. By yielding to vanity you fall a prey to flatterers, over-rate your own me-

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rit, cannot brook contradiction, grow disgusting to your friends, and in a great measure deprive yourself of the pleasure, the instruction, and the faithful wounds of friendship. You are in the way of many disappointments and of much uneasiness. One who thinks of himself more highly than he ought to think, even for good qualities, seldom meets with the honour and respect he looked for. There is a spirit of contradiction which sets itself against every aspiring assuming character. There is an ill-natured pleasure in mortifying the vain. There is no character against which satire is oftener or more sharply pointed. The vain glorious in every profession, in every sphere of life, and in every whimsical appearance which that passion assumes, are held forth as subjects of laughter and contempt. Self-conceit, which every man has his share of, always delights to see the arrogant brought down, and sometimes insults over them.

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It is an aggravation to the pain of disappointed vanity, that you dare not communicate it. None would sympathise, some perhaps would pity you, but the greater part would rejoice; therefore be the consequence what it will you must conceal it: nor is there any thing of that melancholy satisfaction and conscious dignity which soothe and gratify the mind in concealing virtuous sorrow: it frets and festers within you, with not so much as one consolation: it breaks out in fullness of temper, in short ill-natured answers, in displeasure at every thing and with every body.

There is not a vice more inconsistent with the Christian temper. The life, the character, the advices of Christ, the advices of his apostles, are direct and strong against it. The peculiar doctrines of Christianity—the degradation of human nature, our inability to restore ourselves, our need of a mediator and of divine aid,

aid, are doctrines which strike at the root of vain-glory. *We are justified freely by the grace of God through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. Where then is boasting? It is excluded.* Rom. iii. 27.

THE only further direction I shall offer is to transfer ambition from the approbation of men to that of God. Rest satisfied with his approbation who seeth in secret and will reward you openly. Maintain a near and stated intercourse with God. This will counterwork in many ways the workings of vain-glory. From contemplating the number and dignity of God's creatures, we look back upon ourselves with lowly thoughts. While we contemplate the holiness and justice of God, our own imperfection and guilt appear. By meditating on his perfections, and often submitting our conduct to that standard; we gradually acquire a taste for excellence, a desire to resemble and to be approved of

of God. In proportion as this desire increases, we come to undervalue opinions which have their foundation in caprice, perhaps in malice and envy; they no longer wound the peace of our minds. An irregular passion is not subdued at once; but when we present ourselves every evening before our Maker, and recollect in that awful presence the transactions of the day, the recollection of vain-glory makes us sorry and ashamed; dignity of sentiment revives; the love of glory is brought back and fixed on its proper base. For it is not proposed to root out or disappoint the love of praise, but to give it a proper direction, first to aim at what is praiseworthy, and then at the approbation of God, who alone is an impartial infallible Judge.

S E R M O N

S E R M O N VIII.

Prov. xxii. 6.

*Train up a child in the way he should go, and
when he is old he will not depart from it.*

THEY who are well educated generally behave well, for the following reasons.

1. Early impressions are deep. The impressions which first reveal to us the passions and powers of our nature are never effaced.

2. Habit is strong. We have daily occasion to observe its power both over the body and the mind, both in small and in great matters.

3. Early piety is acceptable to God. The first love of an innocent heart is a sacrifice of a sweet favour.

They who entered into the path of wisdom in the morning of their day, and bestowed their strength in the service of their Creator, have richer sources of comfort and hope; the evening yields to them a calmer brighter prospect, than to those who have returned from wickedness even by the most sincere repentance.

I SHALL discourse on education in the following order. First, Of infancy: Secondly, Of moral habits: Thirdly of religious knowledge.

I. THE first stage is infancy. The duty of parents is then summed up in care and tenderness. They are prompted to fulfil it by instinct. *Can a woman forget her sucking child?* She may forget, and therefore it is fit to remind her that the genuine instincts of human nature ought to be respected.

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The charge of infant children involves unpleasant offices, watchful hours, and anxious thoughts. But since you must have cares you can have none less irksome, none more sweetly mingled with affection, none more fruitful of future comfort. The children of the virtuous woman arise and call her blessed.

Consecrate parental cares to God, offer them to him in sacrifice. This is a mean of the divine life which is hid with Christ in God, which gives peace in the midst of trouble, and transforms trials into blessings. It is veiled with humility.

II. OF moral habits.

Even a child is known by his doings, whether his way be pure and whether it be right. If the character and temper be marked and formed by what is done in early years, see that the doings of your children be pure and right.

Parents

Parents are commanded to have their children in subjection. Sweeten authority with love. Exert it, not capriciously, but for good ends which the child may in time discern. Withdraw it by degrees as it becomes less necessary, and admit him by degrees to the confidence of friendship. This is the course of nature. Misguided fond affection takes the opposite course. The bad habits of indulged children are overlooked or excused by parental fondness, by they cannot always be invisible even to a parent's eye. You shall hereafter taste the bitter water of the spring you have corrupted, and wish to control self-will and rebellion when they are uncontrollable.

In establishing parental authority it is not necessary, nor is it meet, to withhold the innocent pleasures of children. Those tendencies only should be checked which are tainted with guilt and lead to misery.

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In the first place, let all tendency to falsehood be checked, and the sacredness of truth inculcated. Teach your children truth by your conduct towards them. Never impose upon them, never break your word, do not recommend and sanctify falsehood by your own example. This is done oftener perhaps than parents are aware. Think whether unhinging truth be not a greater evil than suffering them to cry a little longer.

Some wantonly tell lies to children, and then laugh at their simplicity for believing. It is laughing at an amiable disposition, a disposition to believe what is said, which bespeaks the truth and innocence of their own hearts. It is teaching them to suspect others as deceivers, and in their turn to deceive.

Falsehood quickly springs up, it is sheltered by self-deceit, and evil is called good. Very young persons have been made to
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think that it is not wrong to tell a lie, if it be told to conceal the faults of servants ; as if any consideration could justify falsehood. Let such of my hearers as have occasion to serve where there are children beware of teaching them falsehood. You cannot do a greater injury to your masters, to those little ones, to your own souls.

We all occasionally converse with children, and should beware of laying any stumbling block in their way.

ANOTHER habit which should be formed in youth is Justice. The first principle of social virtue is to injure no one. One may be injured in his person, in his property, or in his good name. Let a respect for those original rights be early inculcated, and every violation of them checked. If a child steals from his parents it may seem a trifle, but the habit of stealing is not a trifle. If he discovers dexterity in the

theft he is perhaps admired ; but it is a perverse dexterity, and may at last prove fatal. If a child steals for the benefit of his parents, they may be tempted to receive and conceal it; but dearly do you purchase what your child has stolen. If children be permitted to steal for their parents, and apprentices be taught fraudulent practices on their master's account; they will hereafter lie and cheat and steal on their own account. They who come to an untimely end, and give the history of their unhappy course, generally begin with petty thefts which they practised in youth, and by which the habit of stealing grew. There are few instances of persons trained to honesty turning thieves, and still fewer of thieves turning honest men ; so powerful is the force of education in whatever way it is directed.

A THIRD habit to be formed in youth is mercy. Truth, justice, and mercy are
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the weighty matters of the law. Man is born to trouble, and his heart is formed for sympathy. The young are prone to compassion, you have only to encourage and direct it. Let them learn betimes to feel for distresses to which they themselves are subject, and to bestow that sympathy and those kind attentions which they themselves may quickly stand in need of. This is HUMANITY. Men are bound together by their common sensibility to pain and sorrow, more strongly perhaps than by any other tie. It is a becoming exercise, in setting out on the journey of human life, to assist and comfort the afflicted; it ensures the returns of sympathy and comfort when our own day of affliction comes. *Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.*

CHILDREN should be formed to resignation. This may be done from the first. A child excessively indulged becomes wayward and impatient; whereas if his real

wants be supplied, his pain relieved when it is possible, and his caprices disregarded; he learns to set bounds to his desires, to bend his will to the will of others, and to bear unavoidable ills in patience. These lessons may be repeated through the whole of childhood and youth, we have occasion for them through the whole of life.

OECONOMY should be taught. The food and dress of children need not be costly. Instruct them in the price of provision, and the means of getting money to pay it. Teach them the way of laying out money, of calculating the expence of a family, and of adapting it to the income. Teach them the art of keeping accounts. For want of oeconomy men of the brightest genius have sunk, and women of rare accomplishments have engendred trouble to their husbands.

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LET MODESTY be taught to children, or rather let their innate modesty be respected. The least breach is dangerous. Improper books and songs and jestings defile the heart; activity, chearfulness, and acts of devotion preserve and purify it. A heart smitten with the love of moral excellence, and elevated by devout joy, has little relish for the pleasures of sin.

III. Of religious instruction.

Observe the method by which God instructs men. It is by the history of great and interesting events; the creation of the world by the word of his power, the operation of his Providence from age to age, a Saviour typified and foretold, his appearance in the fulness of time, the miracles and virtues of his life, his death and resurrection, his coming to judgement, and the dissolution of all things. These truths interest and elevate the young. They learn

to reverence their Creator, and to reverence themselves.

Religious knowledge should be early conveyed. *Whom shall he teach knowledge, and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.* To short histories they early listen. With such the scripture abounds. Repeat them often, and accustom your children to repeat them. *Give line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little.*

There are short maxims in the book of Proverbs, and portions of sacred poetry in the book of Psalms, very fit to exercise the memory of your children. By being treasured up in the memory now, they may hereafter promote the exercise of prudence and devotion.

The words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach

teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. Let not religious truths be always presented in the form of a task, nor the acquiring of them exacted as a hard labour. Let it appear by your conversation that they are uppermost in your own thoughts, that in your hours of leisure they are apt to recur, that you think and speak of them with pleasure. Your own knowledge will increase by communion. *He that watereth shall be watered also himself.*

Dwell on plain useful necessary things. Secret things belong to God, but things that are revealed to us and to our children. Unto man he saith, *Behold to fear the Lord that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.* Beware of troubling and perverting the minds of your children with mysterious speculations and doubtful

doubtful controversies. They engender strife, they divert attention from the weighty matters of the law, they puff up but do not edify. *Ye have sown the wind, and ye shall reap the whirlwind.*

The things of God should be taught with reverence. The solemnities of worship and the awe which surrounds sacred things are early means of piety. The observation of the Sabbath is an example of devout reverence, the worship of God in your families is a daily example of it. While you pray with and for your children, the principles of devotion in their minds unfold : in that sacred hour, they feel themselves the objects of tender affection, they perceive that you are dependant as well as they, that blessings must be derived from the Hearer of prayer on yourselves and on them.

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Let the truths of religion be conveyed to the heart. Improve the seasons proper for conveying them. *For example*, when your child is recovering from one of those early diseases which so oft prove fatal, with the slightest aid he will recognise a Providence.—Your disease was extreme, the physician gave no hope, your companion was carried to the grave : what power restored you to your sorrowing friends ?

Youth seldom passes without a time to weep. The deathbed of a parent or of a young friend melts the heart. Concern and attachment grow as the hour approaches. Death leaves him inconsolable. Immortality is the source of consolation, and now is the time to open it. It accords with lively sorrow, which clings to a departed friend and dwells on the thought of an everlasting union. Divine goodness, which the shadow of death had veiled, shines forth again. Were dying parents,
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in the solemn hour of separation, to awaken a sense of God and of immortality in the minds of children, it would make an indelible impression.

When your child is satisfied that Christ is a teacher sent from God, and willing to be his disciple, it is meet to confess him before men. The celebration of his death is a proper testimony of regard. His death is the amazing testimony of his love; it is his own desire that we shew it till he come; in doing this the power of sin is mortified, virtuous resolution confirmed, and devout joy conveyed to the heart.

The hearts of the young when first admitted to communion with the faithful are accessible and soft. Parents might avail themselves of this season, to recal their early dedication to God, to explain the wisdom and love which inspired the discipline

cipline through which they have been made to pass, to foretel its influence on their future conduct, to anticipate the time when that conduct shall be judged, and to devolve the care of it on themselves.

S E R M O N

S E R M O N IX,

Jeremiah xxxi. 15.

Rachel weeping for her Children,

GOD is visiting the young of this neighbourhood with a dangerous disease, and parents are weeping for their children. It is meet to mark the ways, and listen to the voice of Providence. To assist you in so doing under the present trial, I shall explain, first, the duty of parents to afflicted children; Secondly, the proper sentiments when they are taken away; Thirdly, the lessons to be learned from these mournful events.

I.

AFFECTIONATE, and prudent, and pious care is the duty of parents to afflicted children,

Affection is the dictate of nature, it is excited by pain and danger, it centres on the child of affliction. God provides, in the instincts of our frame, aid and consolation under its miseries ; you are obeying his voice when you bestow them. Affectionate care in the hour of danger will hereafter endear the child, and promote reciprocal affection.

PRUDENCE is of use when near friends are afflicted. Listen not to the ignorant and presumptuous, but rather to men who study and practise the art of curing diseases. It is one of the blessings of Providence to have some capable of ministering to the sick. *Honour a Physician with the honour due to him, for the Lord hath created him.*

him. The Lord hath created medicines out of the earth, and he hath given men skill that he might be honoured in his marvellous works; with such doth he heal the people, and take away their pain.

PIETY should be added to prudence, and affection. The number of diseases to which children are subject, and the 'great proportion of deaths which to us appear untimely, are dark and mournful views. A pious mind investigates and fulfils the designs of Providence.

The sickness of children reminds parents what a blessing health in their family is, and perhaps rebukes their ingratitude. It tends to sanctify parental love. You recal that serious hour when you devoted them to God in baptism: worldly schemes and prospects appear in their ture light: it is now your heart's desire and prayer
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to God that they may be heirs of an eternal inheritance. Their sickness cherishes the spirit of prayer, a spirit that is apt to fail while your tabernacle is at rest and all the branches of your family flourish. When a beloved child is overwhelmed with disease, your heart is sick with hope deferred and anxious concern unutterable; it is the hour of devout resignation.

To parents the sickness of children is a bond of love. The first love may decay through disappointed hopes and unforeseen disquietudes: children cement their hearts again. Children are the objects of your mutual attention, of your most interesting hopes and fears. When they are laid on beds of sickness, you join in soothing their sorrows, and present your joint supplication humble and ardent at a throne of mercy. When they are taken away, your hearts flow out and mingle in the same stream of sorrow: you are united in

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love

love to one another and to surviving children.

Early affliction instructs the young. You learn to bear the yoke in youth. You learn gratitude and love to parents, for they left the pleasures and the cares of life behind, and ministered to you on beds of languishing. You learn to remember your Creator, and to remember death. The bell which you hear so often tolling little children to their graves, is a warning to you.

Untimely graves so often opening forebode immortality. Human nature, as it appears on earth, is an imperfect broken system.

II.

THE proper sentiments when children are taken away.

Jeremiah,

Jeremiah xxvi. 16. 17. *Thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord, and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border.*

Refrain thy voice from weeping. It is a time to weep, to suspend worldly cares, and to take up the cross. God binds parents to their children with a cord of love, and it is a presumption that the heart is hard if it bleeds not when the cord is broken. When the memory of the child awakes, the joy at his birth, the fond hopes that were cherished, growing attachment from his openings of reason and broken accents of affection; and when the sad moments of dissolution are recalled by the mournful solemnities of a last farewell—Rachel refuses to be comforted.

Thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eyes from tears. There may be an excess of sorrow. It drinketh up the spirit and worketh death. You have duties yet to fulfil, and the practice of virtue is a refuge from affliction. Some comforts remain. Your Father gave the bitter cup, and he mingles consolation.

Thus saith the Lord, thy work shall be rewarded. Your labour of love to them shall not be forgotten. It is all recorded in the book of everlasting remembrance; and joyful will the remembrance be in that day when the book is opened, and the dead are judged out of the things written in the book, according to the deeds done in the body.

Thy children shall come again from the land of the enemy. The grave is the land of the enemy. You follow your children thither; your thoughts sink down with them; they now acknowledge another kindred,

dred, saying to corruption thou art our father, and to the worms ye are our sisters : you weep over the wreck and ruins of human nature. *Refrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears. Your children shall come again.* That which is sown in weakness and dishonour and corruption, shall be raised in power and glory and incorruption. Behold the husbandman waiteth long for the precious fruits of the earth, and hath much patience till he receive the former and the latter rain ; be patient also brethren till the coming of the Lord ; and then, ‘ those young and tender plants which are now cut down and ‘ withering around us shall spring up in ‘ fairer and more durable forms.’ The children of the resurrection shall die no more.

There is hope in thine end saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border. There is hope concerning infant children. He who made them will
have

have mercy upon them. He is kind even to the evil and unthankful; and shall they who never transgressed his laws be the objects of his displeasure? Infant children, born as it would seem to suffer and die, are objects of compassion to the human heart; much more to the Father of mercies. You have often prayed for their eternal welfare, and God is the hearer of prayer. The peculiar regards to Jesus to little children is an additional ground of hope concerning them. He shall gather the lambs in his arm and carry them in his bosom. When mothers brought their infant children to him, he took them in his arms and blessed them: he blessed them, and they shall be blessed.

There is hope concerning children who had advanced a little and discovered seeds of goodness. It is natural, when your children are taken away, to review the little history of their lives, and to recall many passages, unheeded by others, but
by

by you marked and remembered. If any good thing toward the Lord was found in the child. the remembrance is full of comfort. If you found their hearts affectionate, and grateful for your care, and submissive to your will, these were the seeds of an amiable and humble spirit. If they loved their companions, and were beloved of them, and beloved of all ; it is the first fruit of that love which is the bond of perfectness, which endureth forever. If they regarded truth, and feared to tell a lie ; if they had a tenderness of conscience so far as they knew good and evil, and stood in awe of offending ; if they loved and listened to instruction ; if the scriptures of truth and the ordinances of religion began to attract and to touch their hearts ; if in trouble they were resigned and spake some words of comfort, and believed in immortality ; if to the last they grew in favour with God and men—it is an anchor of hope to parents tossed

in affliction. He who began knows how to perfect the good work in them.

Thus saith the Lord, they shall be brought again to their own border. Here they were in a foreign land, surrounded with snares and dangers and foes ; and who can tell but a longer stay might have proved fatal to their innocence? They are gone through death to their own border, to the promised purchased possession. Let your sorrow be changed into joy. They are happy, happier than it is possible for you to conceive ; that happiness is secured beyond the power of time or change. Weep not for them. They are past sorrow and they are past temptation. We are mortal, but they shall die no more.

III.

LESSONS to be learned from the death of children.

The

The first lesson is resignation. In many other calamities the hand of man appears, and it requires an effort of piety to acknowledge God in the wrath of men ; but it is God himself who says, *I take away the desire of thine eyes with a stroke.* He changeth their countenance and fendeth them away. Other losses may be retrieved, but this irretrievable : you must go to them, but they will not return to you. It is vain for man to contend with his Maker ; but if you turn to God and pour out your sorrow before him, he will speak peace to your heart.

The examples of resignation in scripture are written for your instruction. When fire from God consumed the sons of Aaron, Aaron held his peace. *I was dumb,* said David, *I opened not my mouth, for thou didst it.* Job's sons and daughters were destroyed by a great whirlwind from the Wilderness, and, Job said, *The Lord gave and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name*

name of the Lord. When the calamity of Eli's children was announced to him, and of his children's children throughout all generations ; he said, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.* Abraham offered up Isaac, and hoped against hope.

SORROW enlives the faith of immortality. You cannot think that they who were so lately the objects of your tenderest concern have ceased to exist, that their love and affection are forever extinguished, that you shall never more behold your children. Immortality opens, it is welcomed without a doubt, you embrace with gratitude to the revealer, a doctrine which restores your children. You see them reviving in another state, adorned with other faculties, about to act in a higher sphere. The meditation fills your soul with solemn satisfaction and joy in believing.

YOUR

YOUR connection with the world of spirits is increased, let your attachment grow in proportion; for they are still your children, objects of your love, worthier now that they are purified from mortality. In that land of love which they now inhabit they cannot but remember you with peculiar affection; you who trained them in the way to heaven, who smoothed their passage through the vale of tears, whom they left behind in scenes of danger and of sorrow. While on earth they were your strongest attachments to the world: They were your companions, your comfort, your hope in this house of your pilgrimage. The comforts of a pilgrim must be transient: but if you follow them with devout affection, and ascend by faith to the world of spirits, and rejoice in their joy; they will still be your companions, your comfort, your hope in this house of your pilgrimage.

THESE

THESE mournful events are memorials of death. *The voice said cry, and he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field.* This day the voice is echoed in our ear, and many of the flowers of youth are cut down in all their beauty and goodliness. It reminds you of death, and reconciles you to it, and prepares you for it. A pious man *, after burying his child, made this reflection. ‘And now, one of our family is gone to take possession of the sepulchre in all our names. Ere long I shall lie down with my child. Perhaps many of the feet that followed it shall attend me thither. It is a warning from Providence that these concluding days of my life may be more regular more spiritual, more useful than the former.

The heart is humanised by affliction ; its pride is subdued, and the little vanities are

* Dr Doddridge.

are dispelled which fluttered round it.
The whole soul is brought down to
the tone and temper suited to a mortal
state.

S E R M O N X.

Pfal. lxxiii. 25.

There is none on earth whom I desire besides thee.

THIS even to the devout is a difficult and high attainment. We run little risk, when we look up to heaven, of resting in the sun or stars as objects of love; we look beyond them to an invisible eternal mind, *Whom have I in heaven but thee?* Is it the same with respect to objects of desire on earth? Are we not ready to love them too well, and in the day of our prosperity to say, 'Who is the Lord that we should serve him. Let us enjoy the good things that are present, let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before they be withered,'

ed, and let no flower of the spring pass by?" To this the heart is prone; and therefore we are exhorted in scripture, *love not the world nor the things of the world*; and therefore humbling views of the world are set before us, *all is vanity and vexation*; and therefore, we meet with many steps which remind us that it is a wilderness.

Even kind attachments may bring forth the thorn. They indeed are given to comfort us. Were it not for the comforts of friendship, the tender-hearted would sink under the disappointments and the ills of life. But they, whose hearts are tender, who are most affected by peculiar and delicate distress; are likewise most susceptible of friendship, and of its sweet consolations. Even in this wilderness friends spring up: there are some in every corner, capable of sincere attachment, of faithful advice, of seasonable aid, of cordial sympathy. With the tenderest attachments upon earth,
change

change, disappointment, and sorrow mingle: these lead to devotion, the refuge of the broken in heart. The Psalmist found treachery in his friend, and ingratitude in the son whom he loved; he was plagued all the day long and his heart was grieved. From the depth of human vanity and vexation his heart ascends to God, *there is none on earth I desire besides thee.* This is the course of providence, follow it with care. When you meet with grievous disappointment, when calamity overthrows your possession, when the desire of your eyes is taken away; those moments are precious, improve them well. The heart is loosened from the world, is weary of life, envies those who sleep in the dust. Human comfort utterly fails. *There is none on earth I desire besides thee.*

THE management of the mind in those trying situations is difficult. The following directions may be of use.

I.

I. IN those moments when the soul is left desolate, do not still seek comfort from the world. Why would you set your heart upon that which is not? God suffers the staff of human comfort to pierce through your hand, and to break under you, that his own rod and staff may support you. When you are in view, at the very entrance, of the promised rest, rest to your soul; go not back to seek it in the wilderness. *Acquaint yourself now with God, and be at peace.*

II. BE not overwhelmed with over much sorrow. The feelings I have described are natural and almost unavoidable in the first flowings of affliction, which make us even wish an end of our existence here; but it is not meet to indulge and brood over them, so as to abandon the duties of life and sink in melancholy. Amiable minds are liable to this excess, and compassion is due to them, but still they should guard against

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it. From those trying situations which bring us near to God, let us return to the world, though with hearts above it; and live and act, like men whose strong attachments to it are already broken, whose bands are loosed,

III. HARBOUR not revenge against those who have injured you, or in any way been the cause of your affliction. Revenge stops the sources of divine consolation. God's ear is open to your cry, but you must not go to him with complaints on any of your brethren, for we are all his offspring. God is love, and your desires cannot reach him if they be polluted with malice. Go to him with a forgiving spirit, with kind affections and ardent prayers even for those who have wounded the peace of your mind. It is a fatal effect of disappointments and wrongs to inspire hatred against mankind; but love to God will heal the wounds you have

have received from men, and make your heart again go out in love to the brethren.

IV. BEWARE of interrupting your desires toward God by any wilful sin. Afflictions do not intercept, they rather raise the desires to heaven; but every wilful deliberate sin spreads the soul with a thick cloud, and separates betwixt us and our God. We are tempted under trials to impatience and peevishness, perhaps to intemperance, or to some imprudent desperate step. These temptations must be resisted. It is God's language to the sons and daughters of affliction, *Them that come unto me I will in no wise cast out. Son, daughter, give me thine heart.* It is his language to all his children, for he is no respecter of persons. Though your hopes in the world be blasted, though father and mother and friends forsake you, though your esteem and affection be despised and rejected; God himself condescends to be

an object of your love. Beware of forfeiting this last, this rich resource; beware lest for one morsel you sell this birthright. That man is miserable and lost indeed who with all his other calamities has made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience; *but unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness.*

V. IMPROVE distresses of every kind as means of virtue, and grounds of praise. With an enlarged and sublime spirit of devotion the Psalmist declares, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted.* Even the children of this world can rejoice in momentary evil which averts danger and loss: much more does it become the children of light to rejoice in tribulation. *Who knows what is good for man?* Our heavenly Father knows; and it becomes his children to cast their cares on him; to ponder the wise mixture of mercy and judgement; to mark an invisible but controlling power,
at

at one time disappointing their hopes and desires, at another disappointing their fears and preventing their wishes, and making all work for good. The just, when their spirits are made perfect, will review with enlightened reason and exalted gratitude, the evidences of a parent's care and love, even in those things which now puzzle and perplex, which vex and disquiet, which humble and afflict them. Anticipate this exercise. Remember the days of darkness, and the light from heaven which opened on your soul. For the wound which seemed unto death, a healing balm was found. To the irreparable loss you are now reconciled. Guilty passions were restrained, and you escaped the bitterness of remorse. The desire of your foolish heart was withheld, and you have escaped from anxiety and vexation. Recall the impressions which disease and sorrow and the house of mourning made upon your heart. Have not they taught you the unsatisfying passing nature of human enjoyments and human

hopes; and cannot you now discern the hand of a parent leading you, by a steep and thorny path, but leading you to supreme felicity?

HEREAFTER your faculties will be raised, and your views extended. You shall look back as from an eminence on the way in which you now walk, and trace and adore the steps of Providence. Scenes of difficult and painful resignation, here below, will then yield a hymn of praise.—It was a father's love which made me bear the yoke in youth, and hid vanity from mine eyes. Disappointments saved my virtue from too severe a trial. Thick clouds arose which darkened every path but the path of duty, and took away the relish of every pleasure but that of well-doing. Wearisome days and nights reconciled me to death. I was taken from the evil to come. My sun shall no more go down.

S E R M O N

S E R M O N XI.

Gen. i. 1.

*In the beginning God created the heavens
and the earth.*

IT is natural for man to inquire, what is the origin of this world which I inhabit? Unprofitable curiosity is checked by revelation; but when curiosity leads to the knowledge of God he himself condescends to gratify it. The origin of the world is revealed. *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,* the only account that accords with reason.

I.

God said let there be light, and there was light. A stupendous view of Omni-

potence opens, the rude materials of a rising world.

Light is sweet. It promotes a chearful intercourse among the inhabitants of the earth. It opens to our view the forest, the vale, the rivers of water, and the little hills which rejoice on every side, the high mountain and the boundless deep; it opens to our admiring view the glorious host of heaven.

The light called be day, and the darkness called be night. The interchanges of light and darkness are pleasant. Some find pleasure in the silence and solemnity of the night. They that watch for the morning feel a growing pleasure as the day dawns and the day-star appears.

The appointment of day and night corresponds to the labour and rest appointed to man. Man goeth forth to his work and to his labour till the evening. In the evening

vening rest is sweet to the labourer. In the darkness of the night all the beasts of the forest creep forth ; the sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.

The vicissitude of day and night reminds us of the vicissitude of human things. The gay colouring of the morning cloud is lost in the labour and heat of the day : the enchanting prospect is again presented at the going down of the sun ; we are hardly fixed in contemplation when the veil of night comes over it. A day is an emblem of life ; the night of death, in which no man can work, is a significant and touching emblem.

The little portions, in which time is measured out, warn and assist us to redeem it.

II.

GOD *made the firmament*, by which is commonly understood the air. The world is gradually prepared for living creatures. Air is one of the necessities of life. Animals both on the earth and in the water breathe it. It is even necessary for the growth of plants. Plants as they grow in sunshine make the air, which has been breathed, fit to be breathed again.

THE motion of air is wind. We know not whence it comes and whither it goes, but we perceive its beneficial and its awful influence. It refreshes scorched lands and dispels noxious vapours, it dries the earth in spring and the fruits of the earth in harvest; it transports them from nation to nation.

Praise him ye stormy winds. A storm summons the attention of unthinking men.

Our

Our thoughts fix with religious awe on the
ruler of the storm.

And when the waves of ocean roll
Sublime delight suspends the soul.

He changes the storm into a calm : awe
resolves into trust and gratitude.

FROM a single expression of the Apostle
misunderstood, a fancy prevails that the
devil has power over the air. The Apostle
is speaking not of the natural but of the
moral world, Eph. ii. 2. *Ye walked ac-
cording to the course of this world—
the course of wickedness. According to
the prince of the power of the air—the
prince or chief of the aerial power of evil
spirits who were supposed to be in the air.
According to the spirit—the rebellious spirit
or temper, which worketh in the children of
disobedience.*

‘The

‘The air,’ says Dr Clarke, ‘is so wonderfully contrived as at once to support clouds for rain, to afford winds for health and traffick, to be proper for the breath of animals by its spring, for causing sounds by its motion, and for transmitting light by its transparency.’ If the devil has power over air he is sovereign of the world. But God will not give his glory to another. *He made the firmament*, and it is part of his universal empire. The winds and the flaming fire are his ministers, the thunder is his voice, he casteth forth his ice like morsels, and melteth them with his word. He arranges and rules the elements in wisdom and love. God reigneth; let the earth rejoice.

III.

God said let the waters under the heaven be gathered unto one place, and let the dry land appear. The earth was hitherto
 3 without

without form. Order rises out of confusion. We behold the earth gathered from among the waters, growing into consistence and form, swelling into mountains and stretched out in plains : islands arise in the midst of the sea : the abodes of the nations are prepared, and their bounds are set. *Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever. Sing unto the Lord, for in his hand are the deep places of the earth, the strength of hills is his,*

The gathering of waters called he sea. From the dry land we turn our eye to see the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep. We see him shut up the sea with doors, and listen to his voice, *Hitherto shalt thou come and no farther.* The earth and the seas obey. They continue this day according to thy ordinance, for they are all thy servants.

THE quantity of water seems great ; but a great quantity is necessary for watering the earth. From the sea, vapours rise and form into clouds, which are carried along with the wind, and distil in dew, and drop in showers. The clouds are intercepted in their course by the high mountains : thereby the mountains, notwithstanding their height, are full of moisture. It gathers into springs, which descend in rivulets, which grow into rivers, and refresh the earth in their course, and return to the sea again. *All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full. Unto that place from whence they came thither they return again, Eccl. i. 7.*

THE waters, which seem an everlasting separation, are by means of sailing a bond of union among men. The productions of different climates are exchanged, and the wants of the nations are supplied. Many go to and fro upon the earth, and knowledge

ledge is increased. We behold new aspects of God's providence when he raiseth the stormy wind, and at the prayer of the righteous maketh the storm a calm. We learn a new song of praise to the God of our salvation, who is the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea.

ON the same day another prospect opens. A rich and beautiful garment is spread over the earth. The mountains are covered with grass and the valleys with corn. Flowers and medicinal herbs are mingled. The fruit-trees grow up by the rivers of water, and all the trees of the forest arise. The bud of the tender herb springs up where there is no man, the wilderness and the solitary place are glad for them, and the desert blossoms as the rose.

LIVING

LIVING creatures are not yet made, the Creator first spreads a table for them. He makes grafs to grow for cattle, and herb for the service of man, and trees for a dwelling to the birds which sing among the branches. *Give us this day our daily bread*, is the prayer which our Saviour taught, to impress upon the heart a sense of dependence, a feeling of gratitude, and an unbounded confidence toward our Father in heaven. We now behold him providing his corn and his wine and his oil with a liberal hand. *My Father worketh hitherto and I work*, was our Lord's apology for his disciples when they plucked ears of corn on the Sabbath-day. *My Father worketh hitherto*. Even on that memorable day when he rested from his labours, and on every returning Sabbath, he worketh by the operation of his providence, making his corns and his grafs to grow; and therefore it cannot be wrong, even on that day, to imitate his goodness, and to partake of his bounty. It is by enjoying
not

not by refusing his mercies that the heart is raised to gratitude.

It is not unworthy of a Christian to take a nearer view of plants as they grow, and of the wisdom in which even they are made. The root, for example, goes down into the earth to become a firm foundation, and sends out fibres to gather nourishment in the soil. The strength of the stalk is proportioned to the height. Leaves shelter the flower and the fruit from cold in spring and from heat in summer. The seeds are protected by husks and shells, and in a variety of ways are sown again.

The growth of corn affords a beautiful meditation to the Psalmist. *Thou visitest the earth and waterest it. Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God which is full of water. Thou preparest them corn when thou hast so provided for it. Thou makest it soft with showers. Thou blessest*

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the springing thereof. Thou crownest the year with thy goodness, and thy paths drop fatness.

The very flowers yield a pleasant and edifying contemplation to a pious mind. They come forth in their appointed seasons, some of them the harbingers of spring, and others the glory of the summer months; more glorious than Solomon in their apparel. If God so clothe the lilies, much more will he clothe you. It is indeed a transient fading beauty, and so is the beauty of the eye that beholds it.

IV.

ON the fourth day we raise our eyes from the earth to behold new wonders in heaven: The sun enters upon his course, the moon and the stars appear, times and seasons are appointed.

It

It is a pleasant thing for the eye to behold the sun. The pleasure in beholding the works of creation is innocent and pure, it is friendly to virtue, it raises the heart to God. While we warn you to be moderate in the pleasures of sense, and to shut your eye on guilty pleasure; we invite you to contemplate the works of God, and to take pleasure in them.

It is not merely to please the eye and delight the imagination that these bodies are placed in heaven. The sun is appointed to rule by day, to enlighten the world in the hours of labour: His returning warmth makes the summer and whitens the fields unto harvest. By means of the daily and yearly revolutions of the earth, days and seasons revolve.

The moon is appointed to rule by night, to alleviate the thick darkness. She gives light to seafaring men, to the labourer in harvest, and to the lonely traveller.

The influence of the sun and moon upon the productions of the earth is great. Moses mentions the precious things brought forth by the sun, and precious things put forth by the moon, among the blessings of Joseph.

Stars assist the mariner in his course, they excite and elevate the genius of philosophy, they exhibit a view of the Creator's power. His spirit garnished the heavens. He binds the influences of Pleiades, and looses the bands of Orion, and guides Arcturus with his sons. He counts the number of the stars, and calleth them by their names.

THE heavens declare the glory of the Lord. They declare it to all the inhabitants of the earth. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their awful and majestic silence speaks the language of every people, it speaks to the heart

heart of man. They are a bond of devout and sacred union among the nations. *Praise him sun and moon, praise him all ye stars of light.*

IN days of prosperity a thought is apt to arise on the days of darkness. An ancient King, when he viewed his army from an eminence, the most numerous and splendid that was ever brought into a field, in the midst of his joy dropt a tear, 'a hundred years hence not one of them will remain.' When we view from an eminence the hosts of heaven, and contemplate and admire and enjoy; the thought of their dissolution arises. The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, the elements shall melt, and the earth shall be burnt up. Look upon the ruins of creation, till the love of this world and of those pleasures which perish with it die away in your heart. Behold a new heaven and a new earth:

there is no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it: the glory of God enlightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof: and there is no night there.

V.

ON the fifth day living creatures come forth and rejoice in existence. *God said, let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life.* The sea, which hitherto seemed a wide and barren waste, becomes a receptacle for all manner of fishes. Many of them are food for man: in procuring it, his courage and skill and industry are exerted. The creation of whales is particularly mentioned as a display of the Creator's power. With the same view they are described in the book of Job. *I will not conceal his parts nor his power nor his comely proportions. Canst thou open the door of his mouth? His teeth are terrible round about. His sneezing maketh a light to shine. His eyes are like*

like the eyelids of the morning. When he raiseth himself, the mighty are afraid. He is King over all the children of pride.

GOD said let every winged fowl come forth. The air as well as the sea must be inhabited. The fowls are furnished with wings, their bodies light, not loaded with their young; that they may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. Birds are agreeable and useful to man; their beautiful colours and elegant forms delight the eye, and their music the ear; the sky lark ascending to heaven in songs is as the morning sacrifice. We learn what this meaneth, *Praise him all ye birds that fly.*

Many of the fowls are food for man. That use should be made of them without unnecessary wanton cruelty. Sensibility to pain and pleasure is common to man and

the inferior creatures ; let man respect that common sensibility.

GOD blessed them saying, be fruitful and multiply. The multiplying of animals is the effect of a special blessing. In this the hand of God eminently appears. The place of their dwelling is contrived for the safe accommodation of their young. The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests. The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks. The sparrow findeth a house, and the swallow makes a nest for her young on God's altar. As for the stork the fir tree is her house.

The time of bringing forth their young is another prospect ; when the climate is temperate and when food abounds. Birds of passage, which fly from the severity of winter, return and multiply in due season. *The stork in heaven knoweth her appointed*

ed times ; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming. Knowest thou when the wild goats bring forth ? Canst thou tell when the hinds do calve ? Their young ones grow up with corn, they are in good liking, they go forth and return not unto them.

The affection of animals for their young is an obvious and edifying sight. The hen gathereth her chickens under her wing, she is inspired with patience and courage and self-denial in their behalf. The eagle fluttereth over her young, spreadeth her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings. Even the sea monsters draw out the breast, they give suck to their young ones ; the fiercest natures are softened into love and tenderness.

VI.

*God said let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and
creeping*

creeping thing and beast. Living creatures on the earth are made on the same day with man: they are more connected with him, and more useful than the other kinds: they contribute largely to his food and clothing, they assist him in his labour and in his travel, they promote many of his pleasures; he finds in some of them grateful attachment and fidelity.

Interpreters understand by cattle such as are usually tamed, and by beasts of the field such as are wild. The interpretation is justified by other passages where the same words occur. The enmity of wild beasts, and their power to hurt and destroy, are proofs that man has lost the dominion which at first was given him. But even here a mixture of mercy appears. Beasts of prey prevent an excess in the kinds which they devour: they are not so fruitful as the innocent and useful animals: their force is seldom united: notwithstanding

ing their superior strength, the courage and address of man when properly exerted are still able to subdue them. The wild beasts of the forest call forth that courage and address. The animals which invade his property, and infest his dwelling, and disquiet him may be guarded against by skill and industry. If this world were free from every danger, and from every inconvenience ; courage and skill and industry would be given in vain.

WILD beasts are numbered among divine judgments, and then indeed they become objects of terror to the guilty. *If you walk contrary to me, saith the Lord, and will not hearken unto me, then I will send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number, and your high-ways shall be desolate. When God's wrath is kindled against a land, the*

caterpillar the locust and the canker-worm become a great people and a strong, mighty to destroy. When man has forfeited the protection of his Creator, the meanest insect prevails against him, he is crushed before the moth. But when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh his enemies to be at peace with him. *At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh, neither shalt thou be afraid of the wild beasts of the field. Thou shalt be in league with the stones of the earth, and the beasts of the earth shall be at peace with thee.*

REMEMBER that thou magnify his work which men behold. Every man may see it. A way of knowledge is opened in the wilderness, and a path in the deep waters; he that runs may read. We peruse with pleasure the writings of an absent friend; we see his mind, and enter into his sentiments, and maintain a friendly intercourse; it is next to the pleasure of conversing with

with him : by perusing the book of nature we see him that is invifible, and acquaint ourfelves with God ; we reverence his power, and admire his wifdom, and rejoice in his love, and afpire to nearer communion with him.

S E R M O N

S E R M O N XII.

2 Cor. xiii. 5.

Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith. Prove your own selves.

WE are often commanded in scripture to consider our ways; to examine, to prove, to judge ourselves. There are two good ends to be answered by this exercise: the first, that we may know in general what our state is; the second, that we may know particularly the temptations we are called to resist, the trials to bear, the duties to fulfil; where our strength, and where our weakness lies.

It is of consequence to know what our state is, whether we be in the way of happiness

piness or in the way to misery. It is surely imprudent to spend day after day, and year after year, without resolving to ourselves this important question. It is awful to think that death should overtake reasonable creatures, who never once employed their reason on a subject of eternal consequence. A traveller going on he knows not whither, faintly represents the folly of those who saunter through life without considering their latter end. In our progress toward eternity it is of use at times to consider the way in which we walk and whither it leads. *Examine yourselves, prove your own selves..*

I. LET us examine our faith in Christ. Do I believe that he was sent to reveal the will of God, and call sinners to repentance? Have I obeyed his call to repent? Have I accepted of the divine mercy through a Mediator? Has my heart ever warmed with gratitude for so great a blessing, and
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my spirit rejoiced in God my Saviour? Is he to me an object of affection and desire, the chief among ten thousands and altogether lovely? Is it my ambition to put on the Lord Jesus, to have that mind in me which was also in him? Am I willing to deny myself, and take up my cross, and follow him through all the steps of his humiliation? Do I often look forward with faith and hope to his second coming? Is it all my desire to be accepted of him at that day? Is it the language of my heart *Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus?*

II. Let us inquire if we have a regard to God in our conduct. Are we solicitous to do his work, and to obtain his approbation? Is it our earnest inquiry, how shall I best serve God in the station which he has assigned me? Health, time, powers of mind, and worldly possessions are from God: do I consecrate them all to him?

Prove

Prove yourselves by this question, *Do I serve God or Mammon?* A man who cannot take the use and comfort of what Providence bestows, may conclude with certainty, that the god of this world has blinded his eyes. Are we just in our dealings? Have we a regard not to the form but to the substance of justice; not merely to what human laws require, but to what conscience requires? Do we remember in our worldly transactions that we are Christians, that the honour of our religion is at stake? Is our character for fair-dealing unstained and irreproachable, and can we appeal to God for the honesty of our most secret transactions? Are we willing and ready to give according to our ability, to assist and support our friends and relations in need, and contribute our proportion to wipe the tear from misery? Is it our firm and full determination, that when truth or justice, or any of the eternal obligations of morality require it; we will forsake all, and hold fast our integrity, and cast ourselves upon

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God's

God's Providence? This is loving God more than the world.

It is further necessary to regard God in the discipline of the heart ; that guilty passions be not the companions of our secret hours ; that we look up to our Father who seeth in secret, laying open our actions and our thoughts before him. *Search me O God, and know my heart ; try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

III. THAT we be not elevated by gleams of devotion, nor too much depressed by the want of them ; let us examine the whole course and tenor of our lives. One pious emotion, which may spring up from fear or fancy or some bodily affection, does not constitute a pious character ; one act of compassion does not render a character humane ; nor does one bad action, quickly repented

repented of and atoned for, make a character bad. Let us think on our former ways. How did we behave in youth? Were we obedient to parents, modest, teachable? Did we remember God, and keep out of the way of evil: or did we walk in the counsel of the ungodly, and stand in the way of finners, and sit in the chair of the scorner? If this last be the sad memorial of early years, I need scarce inform you that the exercise of repentance should be often renewed, and the divine mercy earnestly implored to blot out those manifold offences; that it should lead to a humble and tender walk through the remainder of life.

Let us review the history of riper years. Did we devote ourselves to the service of God and the love of Jesus? Have we continued in his love? Have we all along studied to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour? Has our light so shined before

men that others might glorify our Father in heaven ?

The opinion of others is worth attending to in this part of self-examination. The character which a person bears among friends and neighbours with whom he has spent his days, is probably founded in truth. Am I generally reckoned pious and devout, or graceless and impious ? Am I reckoned honest and sincere, or false and dissingenuous ? Am I reckoned meek and peaceable, or quarrelsome and litigious ; selfish and covetous, or friendly and humane : sober and industrious, or drunken and prodigal ? Am I loved or hated by my neighbours ?

The opinion of the world is not enough. A man may be well accounted of by others, and yet have reason to condemn himself ; he may be accounted godly and sincere, and be at heart a hypocrite. Let us view the tenor of our affections and desires.

fires. Do reason and conscience govern them, *bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ* ; or are our hearts abandoned to wandering thoughts and foolish lusts ?

Inquire deliberately what temper and conduct upon the whole prevail. The Judge of all the earth will do what is right, he will have a respect to the whole part you have acted, *every work will be brought into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil*. Hence the fatal mistake of those who leave the care of their souls to a death-bed. On a death-bed the trial is almost over, it only remains to suffer and die as becomes a Christian. But is it then time to preach repentance to the guilty, who are grown old in sin, who have neglected means, who have despised mercy ? *Be not deceived, God is not mocked, what a man sows that shall he also reap.*

It will be said, that sincere repentance cannot come too late, and it is true: but can that repentance be sincere which is only awakened by the fear of death, and which yields no fruit? Indeed the best thing a dying sinner can do, is to repent in the bitterness of his soul; and some think it the duty of a minister to stir up that bitterness by the terrors of the Lord. Ministers are men of like passions with others: to add bitterness to affliction, and despair to anguish, is hardly a task for those who have *bowels of mercies*. It is the more necessary to declare from this place the truth as it is in Jesus; to warn habitual wilful sinners of an awful hour approaching, when perhaps you will desire our ministration, and when we have no authority to minister comfort. It is fit to warn those who see the death-bed of the wicked, and perhaps hear words of comfort addressed to them, and a prayer for peace to their souls; to take no encouragement.

God

God says *there is no peace for the wicked.*

IV. A FOURTH direction in proving our own selves, is to reflect how we have behaved in times of trial. A foldier's character is proved by his behaviour in battle, a failor's in a tempest, and a Christian's when assaulted by temptation. When in trouble, did we repine or humble ourselves under God's hand? When father and mother forsook us, did we commit ourselves unto God? How have we borne disappointments and losses; did we surrender our spirits to discontent and melancholy, and speak unadvisedly with our lips; or did we bear the evils in our lot like men, did we bear them like Christians, as so many lessons of patience and heavenly mindedness? How have we behaved to brethren in affliction; have we visited and ministered to them, and sympathised with them? *A friend loveth at all times, and a brother*

is born for adversity. Did I prove a friend in need, and seize the time to shew kindness, making no account of trouble or expence; or did I harden myself against kindred and friends, when poverty and affliction came upon them? What gratitude have we shewn to benefactors; did we acknowledge and study to requite their favours, do we retain a grateful sense of them, and are we thence excited to acts of goodness? How did we behave to those who injured and reproached and despised us? This is a trying part of the Christian temper. Did we rule our own spirits, and keep in our tongue with a bridle, displaying the meekness and peace of a Christian? When overtaken in a fault, did we instantly confess and repair the wrong, and humble ourselves before God, and improve it as a motive to prayer and watchfulness against future temptation?

Review your times of trial. From the instances where you have failed, learn humility:

military: from those where you have gained the victory, take encouragement and comfort, and give thanks to God.

V. THE last direction for proving ourselves is to see if we be making progress. The Christian life is a continual striving against the stream of corruption; we either advance against, or go down along with it. Are we more watchful and more successful than in times past against every sin, especially the sins that do most easily beset us? Are we more devoted to the duties of our station? Are our desires after pleasure and wealth and power reduced and conformed to God's will? Are we animated by a growing zeal for truth and peace and righteousness? Are our affections ascending to things above, and loosening from the world?

SELF-EXAMINATION is a work which
every

every once must do for himself. I can only suggest to you the proper way of doing it. Retire, and examine with due attention, what sentiments you entertain of the Christian dispensation; what regard you have to God in your conduct; what the tenor of your life has been; how you have behaved in the day of trial; and what progress you are making in virtue.

S E R M O N

S E R M O N XIII.

Heb. ii. 17.

Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like his brethren.

WE may consider *Christ made in all things like his brethren*; first, as an act of divine condescension to human weakness; secondly, as proposed to our imitation: thirdly, as a mean of sympathizing with us.

I. It is an act of divine condescension to human weakness. Our thoughts of God are imperfect and obscure, because he is invisible and cannot be perceived by any
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of the senses. *We go forward, but he is not there; backward but we cannot perceive him; on the left hand where he doth work, but we cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right that we cannot see him. Behold he is great and we know him not.*

Indeed the least among us can talk of God. *Infinite perfections, eternal existence,* are words common in our mouths; but when any thinking person considers what they mean, what he thinks when he utters these words, he will soon perceive how weak and ignorant we are in the things of God, and of what importance it is to have clear sensible displays of the divine perfections. Reflect on the condition of men when left to themselves, and you find a general an almost universal ignorance of God, and prevalence of idol worship. Even Israel often relapsed into idolatry, and made to themselves gods of graven and molten

molten images. There seems to be a tendency to this in the mind of man, and it shews his weakness and imperfection; he thinks God altogether such a one as himself. Indeed, our worthiest thoughts of God ascend from human nature, by supposing the virtues of a man, purified from human imperfection, and raised to an infinite degree: but here even the strongest and best informed mind is much relieved and assisted, by beholding these perfections in a man like ourselves. The condescension of God appears in making Christ in all things like unto us, and the fullness of the Godhead to dwell bodily in him. We can best conceive of divine power, when we behold the man Christ Jesus commanding the wind and the sea, rebuking unclean spirits, raising the dead to life. We can best conceive of divine goodness, when we behold the Son of God going about doing good, healing all manner of diseases, requiting good for evil.

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These plain and familiar views of God manifested in the flesh, remove the difficulty from his being invisible, and enable us to conceive worthily of him ; they deliver us from all temptation to idolatry, and from paying divine honours to imperfect men. For though Christ was made in all things like unto us, he was yet without sin : he was yet the brightness of his Father's glory : all the angels of God worship him : *the Father hath committed judgement to the Son, that all men might honour the Son even as they honour the Father, and who so honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father who hath sent him.*

THE incarnation of Christ conducts man to the knowledge of God, and to communion with him. Let it awaken our gratitude, that the new and living way is opened to us ; that we are not as on this day assembled before a lifeless image, practising
vain,

vain, impure, and cruel rites ; that the purpose of our solemn assembly is to celebrate the love of our Creator, and to present ourselves living sacrifices holy and acceptable, which is our reasonable service.

II. CHRIST'S being made in all things like his brethren, renders him a fit example for them to imitate. It is difficult for men to know God, because he is invisible ; for the same reason it is difficult for them to imitate and resemble him. We ought to resemble the object of our worship. We are commanded to be followers or imitators of God, to be merciful as our Father in heaven is merciful, to be holy as he is holy, to be perfect as he is perfect. That these commands may be in some measure practicable by men, God has been pleased to manifest his glory in the face of Jesus, to make a visible display of holiness and goodness and mercy ; *that we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of*

of the Lord, may be changed into the same image. It is by beholding the glory of the Lord that we are changed into the same image, and this is agreeable to the principles of human nature. Imitation is one of our first and strongest principles. It prevails in infancy and childhood long before the use of reason. A great part of our knowledge is got by imitation, and a still greater part of our moral character is formed by it. Hence parents are so anxious to keep their children out of bad company, to set them a good example, and to render it familiar : and hence our heavenly Parent condescends to instruct his children of men by his own example, and to render it familiar by making Christ in all things like unto us.

The example of Christ is every way fitted for our instruction. From his humility we learn that pride was not made for man. From his meekness toward those who injured him we learn to repress anger
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and revenge. The young may learn from him subjection to their parents. The wife may learn to employ their wisdom in instructing the ignorant. The great may learn to be good. The poor may learn contentment, and the afflicted resignation. In imitating his devout retirement, we perceive that man is made for devotion, and that in the exercise of it, our souls return unto their rest.

They who saw Christ in the flesh, and heard the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, and were witnesses of all his virtue, enjoyed the benefit of his example in a higher degree, and were enabled to imitate him more closely. This benefit we also are one day to enjoy, and it is to be the great mean of making us perfect in holiness. *It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* No more will be necessary to make us like him, than to see him as he is. At

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present

present we know him but in part, and see as through a glass darkly ; but even now we see and know so much of Jesus as recommends him to our love and imitation. When we think over the history of his life and of his death as recorded in the gospel, we cannot but approve, we cannot but admire ; and if the heart be not greatly corrupted, we wish to imitate his virtue. A pure heart is struck with love and admiration at the view of moral excellence, and yields to its transforming influence.

III. CHRIST was made in all things like his brethren, that he might sympathise with them. He took not upon him the nature of angels, for then he could not have sympathised with men. He did not appear in honourable or affluent circumstances, for then he could have sympathised with few in proportion. Souls are precious in his sight, and he took upon him the form of

a servant. As in circumstances of distress and danger, we most need and most desire the sympathy of a friend, so Christ became a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. To have the sympathy of one who is liable to the same infirmity, who has suffered the same distress, who is interested in our welfare, who is able in due time to work deliverance; this is strong consolation, and this consolation flows from *Christ, made in all things like his brethren*. Are they poor and destitute in the world? He had not where to lay his head. Are they unkindly treated by their friends? He came to his own and his own received him not. Is their good name unjustly taken away? He was made of no reputation. Is their good evil spoken of, and requited with persecution! He was despised and rejected, he was numbered with transgressors. Are they discouraged and cast down by prevailing wickedness? Is it the burden of their souls in retired and se-

rious hours, that their best endeavours are slighted and misconstrued and thwarted? Are they ready to despair and abandon the work of goodness? Still there is sympathy in Jesus Christ. Though he spake as never man spake; and accompanied his doctrine with power from on high; yet it was prophesied of him, *Who hath believed our report?* It was his tender complaint, *Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life:* It was his affectionate lamentation, *O that thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes.* Yet he persisted in his Father's work till he could say, *It is finished,* and was crowned with glory, and seated on his Father's throne.

S E R M O N XIV.

PREACHED BEFORE THE CELEBRATION
OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Matth. xxvi. 36. &c.

Then cometh Jesus with them to a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the Disciples, sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death: tarry ye here and watch with me. And he went a little further, and fell on his face and prayed saying, O my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will,

but as thou wilt. And he cometh to the Disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation: the Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this Cup may not pass away from me except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time saying the same words.

WE may consider. First, The witnesses of Christ's agony and his behaviour to them: Secondly, The nature of that agony which seemed for a moment to overcome him: Thirdly, His resignation under it.

I. HE took with him Peter, James, and John. Peter was distinguished by zealous attachment, James was his kinsman, and destined to be the first martyr to his cause, John was the disciple whom he loved. These three had been with him on the mount of Transfiguration, and heard the voice from the excellent glory. They had seen the brightest, and they now see the darkest scene. The remembrance of Mount Tabor is necessary to support them now.

CHRIST's attention to his friends, and to all the sublime and tender and delicate offices of friendship, appears throughout his life; it appears eminently at the last. He spends his last night with his disciples. He opens to their sorrowing hearts sources of divine consolation; everlasting mansions in his Father's house; and a comforter under the sorrows they should meet in their way to it. He commends them to God who hears him always, and who is able to

keep them. He institutes a memorial of his love, and joins with them in a hymn of praise.

The feeling of his own affliction returns. Willing, it would seem, to spare his disciples, he withdraws to give it vent. He took with him Peter, James, and John. They had reason to consider it, and probably did consider it, as a distinguishing mark of friendship. It is only in the presence of a friend we give vent to all the feelings of the heart; into his sympathizing bosom we pour out our affliction. Hours like this, when the heart is poured out, are sacred to friendship.

Hitherto he had displayed an elevation of mind to which his disciples looked up with reverence. He now descends to the feeling of human infirmity. He becomes an object of compassion to his friends, and unites with them in a new bond of love.

An inflexible mind commands respect, but sensibility draws forth attachment.

Till now, Jesus had ministered to his disciples and taught them gratitude. He now teaches them that the duties of friendship are reciprocal, that they who have been ministered unto must be willing to minister. If there be a friend to whom you had recourse in the day of bitter affliction; when his day of affliction comes round, your ear and your heart should open. He now condescends to be ministered to by his apostles, and in this way to train them up for the ministry of consolation.

Their attention and sympathy, though sincere, were not proportioned to his affliction. He found them asleep. Our friends are the last human resources; and when they seem to forget us it is natural to complain. *Could you not watch with me one hour?* He instantly recollects their willing-

willingness, and allows for their weakness. *The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.* A sentiment which accords with the present feeling of his own mind, and perhaps rises out of it. His spirit is now willing to obey God, but it strives against the weakness of mortality. In that he himself suffers being tempted, he knows how to succour them that are tempted.

II. CONSIDER the nature of that agony which seemed for a moment to overcome him.

Jesus knew all things that should come upon him; a knowledge which is in mercy hid from men. He has before his eyes *the wounds and bruises, the piercing of his hands and his feet, the pouring out his soul unto death*; which all the prophets testified of him, and which he must now accomplish.

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He feels for his disciples who are to be scattered, for Jerusalem because of the miseries coming upon her, for a world lying in wickedness. The friend of man feels for the foolish and ungrateful who are in every age to despise and reject his gospel. *The Lord lays on him the iniquity of us all.*

The agony which he now endures is voluntary. We are unable to avert the evil that is coming upon us : Were we able to avert it ; the interests of our brethren, and the purification of our own hearts, which are accomplished by obedient suffering, would be often sacrificed to the relentings of humanity. Ignorance and weakness must needs accompany the trials of fortitude to which we are called. The fortitude of Jesus is distinguished and aggrandised by the power which he possessed. *No man taketh my life from me. I have power to lay it down, and to take it again.* This power is a source of his present agony.

The

The will of his Father, the fulfilling of the scriptures, his love to men, and the blessings which his death would purchase ; these determine him to drink the bitter cup. Still the voice of nature is heard. It costs an effort to suspend his power, and yield himself, and become obedient unto death.

The near approach of suffering is a time when it is felt the most. The approach to battle is an awful moment; when even the hero's mind is troubled. The Captain of our salvation is now entering the lists. In the silence and solitude of the night he tastes before hand every ingredient of the bitter cup, and feels them bitterer than when he came to drink it. His sorrows came in succession ; they were scenes of heroic virtue as well as of bitter agony. The good confession which he witnessed before Pontius Pilate, his compassion for the daughters of Jerusalem, love to his enemies, attention to his mother and his friend and his fellow-sufferer, soothed and dignified

dignified his sorrow : a heathen bore witness that he was the Son of God : Heaven and earth bore witness. But he now *treads the wine press alone*

BEHOLD the man of sorrows with a cup of trembling and astonishment in his hand. Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto his sorrow. Let your thoughts dwell upon this object, and let your hearts open to its influence.

The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning. Scenes of sorrow humanise the heart. While you behold the last agonies of a friend, every tender emotion awakes, the world is shut out, immortality opens ; vain and covetous and sensual passions find no place, the heart is moulded into a pure, serious, benevolent, frame ; a frame which becomes human nature, which bears a resemblance to the Father of mercies. The religion of Jesus, which in every view is
calculated

calculated to make the heart better, presents a scene of deep distress, and by an appointed memorial often recalls it. We this day assemble in the house of mourning, to behold the dying agony of a friend. It is good to feel that tender sympathy, and those awful impressions which the presence of pain and death inspires,

This is not merely a spectacle of pain and death. The Son of Man is made perfect by suffering. A just man bearing with fortitude the reproach and punishment of injustice is a bright display of virtue. There is in the human heart an attachment to innocence in distress, there is an admiration of suffering virtue, and a tendency to imitate the virtue we admire. In Christianity every mean of virtue is found, and every avenue to the heart is opened. Jesus though a son learned obedience by the things which he suffered. The sad moments of his life, which we now contemplate, are the moments of obedient suffering.

If

If the patience of Job, and the faith of Abraham, rendered the Most High propitious to their friends, shall not this more perfect faith and patience draw down blessings upon men whom he is pleased to acknowledge as his brethren?

Think, while the Man of Sorrow rises to your view with that cup of trembling and astonishment in his hand, think of the love which makes him drink it. Were there no interests but those of humanity, it is yet a spectacle to melt the heart, and draw tears from the eye. But he whom you behold thus stricken and smitten of God, in garments rolled with blood, he loves you. These drops of blood are the costly tokens of his love.

III. CONSIDER the resignation of Jesus. *Father if it be possible let this cup pass.* From the depth of sorrow he looks up to God as a Father. With the confidence
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and simplicity of a child he opens the real feelings of his heart, praying that the cup might pass. He repeats the same words thrice, with that earnest importunity he recommends to others, and by means of which the soul follows hard after God. *If it be possible*, if it consist with the plan of Providence and the honour of thy supplicant. The sense of agony has carried him along, but he quickly returns; *not my will but thine be done*. The cup is not removed, but his spirit is softened into resignation.

The Son of man was made in all things like his brethren. He is now touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and we learn from him how to bear them,—an important lesson to the children of men. The cup of affliction we have all to taste, and our souls shall be sorrowful even unto death. We here learn that it is not wrong nor unbecoming to feel affliction, and to express the feeling we have of it in the presence

presence of our intimate friends, and even to pray that the cup may pass. Let persons of great sensibility mark and remember this. There are peculiar regards in the gospel to those whose hearts are tender; it gives consolation which they only can receive; Jesus sympathises with them. He now passes before us through death, not with an awful insensibility which leaves the feeling heart behind, but with that tender fellow-feeling of human infirmity which reminds us that we are indeed his sisters and his brethren.

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S E R M O N

S E R M O N XV.

Lev. xix. 12.

Ye shall not swear by my name falsely.

I SHALL explain; first, the sin here forbidden; secondly, the guilt and danger of it; thirdly, the means of avoiding it.

I. THE sin here forbidden, is asserting upon oath what one knows to be false.

Evasive answers made with an intention to conceal the truth, expressions which admit of two meanings used with an intention to mislead the judge or the jury, secret exceptions or additions which render
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an assertion different from what it is understood to be, are ways of swearing falsely. Direct perjury alarms the conscience; reservations at the time and explanations afterward are used to quiet it. To enumerate all the means of procuring a false peace were difficult and perhaps improper; but it is proper to warn you, that dissingenuous witnesses are often detected by a discerning judge, that God cannot be deceived, and that the excuses which now satisfy your own mind will not always satisfy it.

You may think it excusable to swerve a little from truth for the sake of a community to which you belong, or of the party you espouse, or of a patron to whom you are indebted: it may seem generous by a little prevarication to serve a friend, it may seem an act of filial love to screen your father's property from his creditors by swearing that it is your's; and it may seem compassionate, by bearing false witness, to save

the guilty from punishment. *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death* *.

One not wholly unprincipled may be led through avarice, anger at being prosecuted, and a pride in adhering to what he has often said, to swear falsely: and yet when the heat of contest is over, when the dishonourable victory is gained, and the mean prize contemplated, when the whole is reviewed in sober sadness; the voice of conscience is heard again, its violated rights are vindicated. He finds no rest till he gives back what he has got by perjury. If this be an account of what really happens, it is a warning to judges to delay administering an oath till other means of decision be tried, and till the man who is to swear has time to think. It is a warning to those who litigate, to commune with their own hearts before it be too late.

IF

* Prov. xiv. 12.

If any reconcile their minds to habitual perjury, because the profits of trade and provision for their families are interwoven with guilt; necessity is laid upon us to undeceive them. We dare not heal so dangerous a wound slightly, nor say, Peace peace, where there is no peace. The practice of false-swearing must be renounced, the accursed fruits of it restored, and a contrite heart offered to the God of mercy.

TEMPTING others to swear falsely is forbidden. They who employ their wealth to corrupt, or their power to intimidate, or their talents to explain away the obvious meaning of an oath; are partakers of the guilt in which they involve the perjurer.

Let witnesses beware of those who would tamper with them. They court and flatter, they hint whom it will oblige if you can truly swear so and so, and mingle

threats, they endeavour to talk you into a persuasion that you know or remember as they would have you. These are the children of the wicked one, they are doing his work, plotting your eternal ruin. Stop your ears against their insinuations, partake not of their drink and their dainties, have no communication with them.

II. THE guilt and danger of swearing falsely.

The guilt is deliberate. From other wanderings the remembrance of God brings us back, but this is at once to remember and disobey him. The perjurer reasons with himself, but not aright. *Doth God know? Is there not one event to the righteous and the wicked, to him that sweareth and to him that feareth an oath?*

To one who had received money in trust, and was about to swear that he had
not

not received it, a heathen oracle said,
'Perfidious oaths and violated faith are oft
'attended with a present gain: swear
'boldly then, for the just shall die as well
'as the unjust: but know that vengeance
'awaits the perjurer: his seed shall be ab-
'ject upon earth, then shall the offspring
'of the just rejoice.' We have a more
sure word of prophecy, Zechariah, v. 3. *The*
curse goeth over the face of the whole earth,
and it shall enter, saith the Lord, into the
house of him that sweareth falsely by my
name, and it shall remain in the midst of his
house, and shall consume the timber thereof
and the stones thereof. It is a proverbial
observation of your own, that the man
who swears falsely has never afterwards 'a
'day to do well.' He has hardened himself
against God, and he cannot prosper. His
mind is like the troubled sea. In the lone-
ly and in the perilous hour, he is haunted
with this dismaying thought, that God is
his enemy.

THE guilt and danger of false swearing further appear in its effect upon society, Property, reputation, life, the most important human rights, are violated. Ask the man who has suffered by perjury, and he will tell you what a heinous crime it is. Put yourself in the place of such a man, and listen to the language of your own heart,

Perjury is punished by the laws of men.

If a false witness rise up against any man, and testify against him that which is wrong, then shall ye do unto him as he thought to have done to his brother.*

If an innocent man has suffered death through perjury, it is just that the false witness die. 'He has
'assassinated his brother, and contaminated
'with blood the sacred stream of justice.'

By our own law, imprisonment, confiscation, and infamy; are denounced. One who

* Deut. xix. 16.

who breaks down the fence by which liberty and property are secured, forfeits his own; the violator of truth is consigned to infamy. Let not the glare of wealth, nor the glosses of casuistry, nor fashionable maxims of politeness, efface the brand of infamy from the perjurer.

Among all nations an oath is respected. Even the worshippers of false gods are afraid to swear falsely. It seems one of the original notices given to men, that there is an invisible witness of human actions, and a day of just retribution. It is given to supply the imperfection of human laws, and to strengthen with the band of religion, every moral tie. Were it not for the sacredness of an oath, innocence would cease to be a protection, industry would be vain, a good name would be a precarious treasure, mutual confidence would cease, the bands of society would be broken.

III. MEANS

III. MEANS of avoiding injury.

Were a discourse on this subject addressed to lawgivers, it might be suggested, that reverence for oaths is lessened by their frequency; that perplexing oaths annexed to offices of truth exclude the conscientious; that revenue oaths give premiums to the impious; that there is danger in obliging men either to perjure or betray themselves; that political passions and commercial interests, when bounded by oaths on every side, and obstructed at every step, will at last break through them; that one who has made light of excise and custom house and election-oaths, is prepared to make light of oaths which affect private property and life; that a perjurer is fit for treason. The strongest pillar may be overloaded, and when an oath breaks down, the fabric of civil government will shake.

My business at present is to teach private Christians the means of avoiding perjury.

Attend

Attend to the nature of an oath. It is an appeal to God who knoweth all things. You blush to tell a lie in the presence of one who can detect you. Why do you thus stand in awe of man? It is because the image of God is stamped upon him, and reflects an abhorrence of falsehood. God's presence is recognised by an oath. A sense of his presence corrects the errors of the understanding and of the heart. The difference betwixt right and wrong appears. The obligation to truth is felt. There is conscious dignity and pleasure in the divine approbation and complacence.

Let the words of an oath be pondered.

SO HELP ME GOD: Help me to fulfil the obligation I now come under. So help me in the hour of solemn devotion, when thou bestowest the blessing from on high on the man who has not sworn deceitfully. So help me at my utmost need. There are sorrows

sorrows and dangers through which we have all to pass, when the help of man is vain, when our hope is in God: to swear falsely is to renounce that hope.

AS I SHALL ANSWER: Significant and awful words. The tribunal of God rises to my view, at which I shall answer. Books are opened which contain the actions and thoughts of men, where the appeal I now make is recorded. The world and its transitory interests disappear. *My soul wait thou only upon God. Judge me O Lord for I have walked in mine integrity.*

AN oath for confirmation is the end of all strife. In giving evidence upon oath you are acting for the public, promoting the course of justice, fulfilling the duty of a citizen. Every private consideration should then be sacrificed to the public good. It is for the good of the public that truth prevail and justice be done.

A witness must begin his testimony with avowing himself impartial. It is a wise precaution. Friendship or attachment, favours received or expected, ill-will or jealousy or envy, eventual gain or loss, are biases even with the upright. *Let a man therefore examine himself.*

Consider yourself not as a witness for the party at whose instance you are called, so as to say every thing which may serve his cause and nothing against it, but rather as a witness to the truth. Pretend not to give a full account of things you do not fully and certainly know. Do not favour a poor man in his cause, nor honour the person of the mighty. Neither give your evidence a turn to the advantage of a generous man, nor to the prejudice of an oppressor. Suffer not zeal for a good cause nor abhorrence of evil to transport you beyond the sacred boundary of truth. If you perceive that the judge or jury mistake your meaning, interpose to set them right.

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If you know any material circumstance which has not been asked, it is fit to mention it; and if after mature recollection a doubt about any fact remains, it is fit to express that doubt. To tell all the truth, and nothing but truth, is what an oath requires.

To fear an oath is a mean of keeping it. An awe is felt in God's presence. His judgements make us afraid. This fear which so well become us, and which all may cherish, is a better preservative from falsehood than profound reasoning. *The disputers of this world darken counsel. Wise men after the flesh seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and to make his law of none effect.* The Scribes and Pharisees said, *who so sweareth by the temple it is nothing, but who so sweareth by the gold of the temple he is a debtor.* The Greeks were at the same time a learned and perfidious people. The most learned order of
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the Roman Church were the most presumptuous teachers of perfidy. Ingenuity is not needed for the observance but for the breath of an oath. *My son, cease from the instruction that causeth to err. Behold, to fear the Lord that is wisdom.*

The fear of an oath overcomes other fears. You are called perhaps to give a report upon oath founded on skill in your profession. The fear of reflections from your brethren of the same profession, of offending a great man whose interest is at stake, and of suffering in your future employment, subside ; for the fear of God is before your eyes.

He that feareth an oath will avoid taking one unnecessarily, or without due inquiry. He will not rest indolently in the opinion and practice of another when he himself must swear. In a matter of such consequence he finds it prudent to see with his own eyes, to use his own reason, to listen

sten to his own conscience, to think and judge and act for himself. He will avoid swearing while a doubt remains in his own mind. Here, if any where, the safe side should be chosen. It is doubtless the safe side to avoid even a risk of swearing falsely. If temporal interest must be resigned, if the favour of the great must be forfeited, if ambition must be checked; they are sacrifices with which God is well pleased. An approving conscience is an ample recompense.

Compare calmly the two states; of one in place and favour and opulent circumstances, but who has made his way through false oaths, and of one in humble circumstances who retains his integrity.

THE practice of swearing in common conversation, so absurd in itself, and so expressive of emptiness, ill manners and an undisciplined mind; is further aggravated

as it leads to perjury. One who has broke through the restraints of decency is prepared to break through other restraints. He can hardly retain reverence for a name which he daily profanes, and a tribunal to which he appeals about every trifle; nor stand in awe of damnation which he lightly imprecates on the souls of others, and on his own soul.

AN habitual regard to truth is a mean of avoiding false oaths. Religious and moral obligations corroborate each other. One who is afraid to tell a lie, thinks of perjury with horror; but the band of religion is feeble when the band of truth is loosed. One who is cautious in making promises and scrupulous to fulfil them, will be more so when bound by an oath. *He changeth not though he swear to his hurt.*

SOBER industry is a mean of avoiding temptation. Want, when it is the effect of idleness, mismanagement, or dissipation, may tempt men to swear falsely. Wretches who sell themselves to commit this great transgression are probably such as have contracted habits of sloth and luxury, without means of gratifying them.

YOU have now seen what perjury is; that it is to assert upon oath what you know to be false, or in any way to disguise what you know, so as to obstruct or pervert the course of justice. You have seen the guilt and danger of it with respect to God and men, this world and the next. The means of avoiding it are to understand and fear an oath, to refrain from common swearing, to reverence truth, and to be industrious.

WE may all have occasion to swear. Every Christian should understand his duty in this respect. To bring away from the judgement-seat a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men is one of those things which belong to our peace.

S E R M O N XVI.

Rom. xiii. 8.

Owe no man any thing.

I SHALL mention the most likely means
of paying what we owe.

THE first mean is diligence in business. Most men depend on business for an honest livelihood; and it is Paul's advice, a little above, *Be not slothful in business.* Make no unnecessary delay, nor set about it with a slack or unskilful hand. A due distribution of time and labour, and a punctual adherence to it, are means of diligence.

ligence. Yield not to languor, nor to the importunity of companions, nor to a taste for any pleasure however innocent, so far as to break an engagement, or neglect the duties of your profession. *Seest thou a man diligent in business, he shall stand before Kings.* It is agreeable to Kings and great men to have their commands obeyed and their business done without delay: they may prefer the company of one that is slothful and social, but they employ a man diligent in business. *The hand of the diligent maketh rich.*

There are a few professions where the reward is not in exact proportion to diligence. Servants of the state and of the church have usually a fixed salary. If a sense of duty cannot influence them, they might consider that diligence is a mean of advancement, and extreme negligence of degradation: if negligence be indulged it will soon grow extreme. They might consider further, that a habit of inattention to

the duties of their office will gradually extend to their domestic affairs, and all will go into disorder.

THE second mean of paying what we owe is thrift, which should pervade your whole business and economy. Many trades depend on small profits, and the ordering a household is a detail of minute particulars. *He that despiseth small things shall fall by little and little.*

They who have families and a growing expence, must study to regulate both so as to render to all their due. It is one of the duties of marriage to unite in this study. Of a virtuous woman it is said, *the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her*; while providing for his family abroad he trusts in her frugal management at home. *She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life*; her frugality is not suspended by fits of sloth, nor frustrated by fits

fits of extravagance. *She looketh well to the ways of her household*, takes the charge and oversight of every thing with a skilful and watchful eye. *She worketh with her hands*, neither eating the bread of idleness herself, nor allowing her children and domestics to eat it. *She maketh fine linen and selleth it*; whatever is not needed for her family, she turns to account by merchandise. *She considereth a field and buyeth it*; she makes a purchase with due consideration, and suffers not the loss nor discredit of a foolish bargain. *She planteth a vineyard with the fruit of her hand*, with what she has gained by industry.

Before beginning to plant or to build, it is prudent to count and provide the cost. *He that buildeth his house with other men's money is like one that gathereth himself stones for the tomb of his burial. Prepare thy work without*, says Solomon, *and make it fit for thyself in the field, and afterwards build thine house.* Apply first to

profitable undertakings in husbandry, or trade, or arts. Let the ornaments of a house and the pleasures of the table be your last expence, and fruit of your labour.

It is of importance to teach children frugality, and to guard them when setting out in life against needless expence. The future circumstances of children, especially of daughters, may not be so affluent as those of their parents. At any rate, moderation in all things is a virtuous habit.

The rules of moderation and frugality cannot be very precise. If the object be to pay debt, one can scarce be too minutely and severely frugal. 'If a man would keep even hand,' says Lord Bacon, 'his ordinary expences should be but half his income.' There are many extraordinary expences. Parents should look forward to the expences of education. We are subject
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to disease, and should have something in reserve for that time of need. We may be involved in a law-suit. Additional taxes may be imposed, and the price of provisions raised. Those who are indebted to us may be in straits, and by living frugally we can have patience with them. Dependents may be unfortunate, and the landlord who lives within his income can feel for his tenant's calamity, and abate somewhat in a bad season. Our friends may come to want, and it is a desirable thing to be able to assist them. There are public works of benevolence and utility, toward some of which it is decent to contribute. By providing for extraordinary expences we are seldom obliged to borrow, which is a humiliating and expensive course. One may have no friends, or those whom he counts upon may deceive him, or those whom he has obliged prove ungrateful: the suppositions are unpleasant, but not impossible. We may meet with losses, and it is prudent to expect them.

Left

Left frugality should tend to avarice, let it be practised rather with a view to keep even than to accumulate. Let us use with cheerfulness what we can fairly call our own, and be often giving away. *There is a time to keep and a time to give away.* In the discerning of these times frugality differs from avarice,

A THIRD mean of paying what we owe is exactness. The fruits of diligence and frugality may be lost by confusion. *Put all in writing*, says the son of Syrac, *that thou givest out or receivest in.* This is a memorial of what we owe, it is a mean of knowing how matters stand, and where the danger lies. If there appears a tendency to exceed, we review all the articles, and judge where it is fittest to retrench.

To finish one thing before beginning another, to put every thing in its place, to keep discharges and vouchers, are apparently

rently small matters ; and yet, by being duly attended to, much time is saved in the course of a life ; the reputation of honesty is maintained, which often suffers by indistinctness ; much trouble, and some loss, and some disputes and law-pleas are avoided.

Exactness among friends and relations is a mean of preserving love. Friends and relations, in the flow of mutual affection, may think exactness unnecessary ; but affection ebbs again, and selfishness returns. When an account is old and ravelled, both sides are apt to be suspicious. Suspicion of one who was trusted and loved cuts deep. Quarrels among relations are the bane of life. Many of those quarrels might be avoided by exact accounts. *Be not thou ashamed of exactness, of reckoning with thy partners or companions, or of the gift of the heritage of friends.*

PUNCTUAL payment is material. The use of money is valuable, and the time of creditors precious. This should be considered by the rich in their transactions with the poor. The price of labour is sacred ; it is respected by human laws and with reason ; the man who yields up his time and strength, and skill, and liberty to the will of another, is peculiarly entitled to a recompense. *At his day shalt thou give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it, for he is poor and setteth his heart upon it, lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee.* Labourers who are defrauded may not have it in their power to redress their own grievances, but the judgments of God are denounced. *Go to now ye rich men, weep and howl for the misery which shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you. Behold the hire of the labourer, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth.*

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The behaviour of the rich to the poor is painted by ancient writers in dark colours.

' As the wild ass is the lion's prey in the wilderness, so the rich eat up the poor.

' Lend not to one that is mightier than thyself, or if thou lendest count it but

' lost. Do not rich men oppress you and draw you before the judgement-seat ?

' What mean ye that ye beat my people in pieces, and grind the faces of the

' poor ? Behold the tears of such as are oppressed, and they have no comforter.

This picture, it may be thought, refers to times less equitable and humane than the present.

Still, such manners having prevailed and become proverbial, is a presumption that there is some tendency to

them in human nature, and a reason why the rich should guard against that tendency.

Let the rich reflect on the disadvantages the poor are under in procuring payment.

They are afraid of contending at law with

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one that is mightier than themselves. Laws made by the rich favour of self-partiality. The execution of them is purchased with money. The law's delay may be purchased. A great man makes his demand with authority ; he is not apt to sympathise with hardships which he neither feels nor fears. The poor must borrow from one another to pay at their peril the great man on his day : A great man seldom imposes on himself the same necessity of keeping his day with the poor ; they cannot enforce it. A trader or artist may have his credit at stake on the one hand, and be afraid of offending his customers on the other. *The rich man hath done wrong, yet he threateneth withal, according to his riches his anger riseth ; the poor is wronged yet he must entreat also ; the threats of the rich are often more respected than the entreaties of the poor. If these and the like reflections were admitted, they might work on the honour and ingenuity of the rich.*

Honour

Honour is a principle which the rich pretend to. It is said to effect the payment of debts contracted at game. Though it be wrong to contract such debts, it would be a dangerous encroachment on principle not to pay them; but it is honourable in the true sense of the word to be punctual in paying those lawful creditors who hesitate to ask, who cannot enforce, who suffer in silence.

The last effect of exactness; is to ensure the payment of what we owe at death. It is the concluding evidence of an honest man to leave his affairs in order. There are good reasons for making our latter will when in health. It is a memorial of the tenure by which we hold worldly possessions, and of the day when we shall resign our stewardship. You may be biaſſed when sick, by the effect of sickness on the mind, by the importunity of those about you, and by passions which a sick-bed sometimes awakens. Now, you can com-
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mune calmly with your own heart, and with a confidential friend. If there be any article dictated by resentment, or partiality, or vain glory, or caprice, it is not too late to correct it. You can frame your disposition a-new, with a strict regard to the calls of justice and natural affection and gratitude and friendship and compassion—in words so plain as to leave no room for dispute, and in a spirit so equitable as to leave none for murmur. When sickness comes, your character for justice is sealed; the mind is free for the exercise of patience and faith; the heart is open to those comforts which attend the death-bed of the just.

It will perhaps be objected to this subject, that it favours of worldly mindedness. Why should immortal beings spend so many and such serious thoughts on money? Many virtues and vices are connected with the use or abuse of money; the word of
God

God contains many instructions about it; and Christ has said, *If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?* You wish in this place to shut out the world with its cares, and we often present to your faith the everlasting mansions. But we must likewise advert to our conduct in the world, to see whether it consists with the well-grounded hope of possessing them.

THIS subject was suggested by the late numerous bankruptcies, with the views of character and conduct which some of them exhibit *. The power of the moral sense seems to be declining, and the neglect of moral and casuistical preaching, or an application of the Christian rule to particular cases, may be one cause of that decline. The influence of preaching, I know, is small: the experience of many years,

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* Preached on the national fast, 1778.

and of many unsuccessful attempts, have convinced me, that it is smaller than I once thought it, and that there are some upon whom it has no influence. Those who are deliberately unjust, and contract debt without any prospect or intention of paying it: those who enter into leagues to deceive, who pervert the relation of father and son, transferring goods from one to the other to defraud their creditors: those who *live at ease, and drink wine in bowls, and chant to the sound of the viol*, while their creditors languish: those who betray their trust, and convert to their own use what was given them for behoof of others: none of those will be moved by preaching, nor by any of the ordinary means of grace; upon them the sentence is already gone forth, *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still*. But upon these who have not yet sold themselves to commit iniquity, religious instruction may have influence. Upon well-disposed minds the very hearing what is right and what is wrong has a
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good effect; when they are reminded of what they ought to do, they do it: yet the well-disposed may be so forgetful, that they need to have their pure minds stirred up by way of remembrance.

THERE are some subjects where conscience co-operates with the preacher: the duty of paying debt is one. When a speculative doctrine is preached, you may think it erroneous; but you must allow that it is right to pay what you owe. An eloquent discourse of piety or benevolence makes the heart to glow; if the hearer cannot reach the high standard held forth, he finds reasons, and perhaps good ones, for resting in a lower: but the doctrine of justice is precise; he finds no reasons, at least no good ones, for departing from one jot or one tittle.

IN hearing a moral sermon one is apt to apply it to some neighbour ; but justice like death is a subject which belongs to all : like death, too, it is apt to slip out of the mind ; and some live as if the day of payment and of death would never come.

THERE are virtues which belong to particular circumstances, and the season for the exercise of them may pass ; but to owe no man any thing is a duty which will still be recurring. A disciple of Christ *hungers and thirsts after righteousness* ; he has the same habitual strong desire to do what is right that he has to eat and drink. The practice of justice is the nourishment of his hidden life, and fraud the poison.

S E R M O N XVII.

Rom. xiii. 8.

Owe no man any thing.

I SHALL now mention the sacrifices which must sometimes be made to justice.

I. ONE must sometimes bear the reproach of selfishness in order to pay debt or to keep out of it. The contempt which attends avarice, and the tendency of the present age to charity and expensive living render this difficult. Hence it is not surprising if some, especially when young, go

to greater expence than they know they ought, and commit one error to avoid the imputation of another.

Distinguish betwixt apparent and real approbation, betwixt that which is well and that which is ill founded, betwixt a temporary and a permanent one.

The shew of wealth and liberality procures apparent approbation. Outward respect and flattery are got from those who are ostentatiously entertained and overpaid, but no inward respect. The wise disapprove of excessive shew, and sit uneasy at a feast which they know has cost more than the giver can well afford.

A reputation founded on conduct which we ourselves know to be wrong yields little satisfaction; but one that is well-founded is accompanied with self-approbation: if it should not be enjoyed for a while, there is still the consciousness of deserving it, and
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the hope of obtaining it when the whole case is known.

At death a man's character is fixed. Some have been accounted narrow as long as they lived ; and it appeared at last that their object was, not to hoard, but to render to all their due. This is no uncommon case ; and it should teach us to beware of imputing avarice to those who in all probability are only labouring to be just. One who has transgressed the bounds of oeconomy to obtain a character loses it at death. Some divines, who love to depreciate human nature, call good works *shining sins* : acts of beneficence with other men's money are properly so called, and they will appear in no other light when the truth is known. *The memory of the just shall be blessed, but the memory of the wicked shall rot.*

The day of decision may come before death. The characters of those who cannot pay what they owe are severely scruti-

nized. It is melancholy to think how few, even of those characters which are reckoned good, can stand that scrutiny. Many particulars in their conduct and manner of life, which before were overlooked or silently marked, are now censured openly. Their good deeds are forgotten. They who partook of their dainties lift up the heel against them. There is so strong a tendency to this kind of censure, that one who would bridle his tongue must watch against it, and destroy the root of bitterness from whence it springs. We cannot stop the mouth of censure : if it be merited we have no consolation : it is the more necessary to *judge ourselves that we be not judged.*

The character of a bankrupt will either rise or fall. They who have not brought want on themselves, who have made the nearest possible approach to justice, who descend to labour and self-denial that they may reach it, and who pay the full amount of their

their debts, after human laws had canceled them ; these men rise in the esteem of the world and in their own esteem, they are witnesses for virtue. Those bankrupts, on the other hand, who persist in idleness and luxury and expensive shew, are objects of public virtuous indignation. Indignation may diminish through the frequency of the crime, and the rank of those who commit it, and the speeches of those who justify it ; but when notorious injustice ceases to be the object of public indignation, a pillar of virtue is fallen.

2. FASHION must often be quitted for the sake of justice.

Discretion is necessary as well as fortitude in making this sacrifice. The desire of being like others is strong, and should be gratified in things indifferent. When fashion leads to an expence beyond our income, we ought to stop. This is a conformity

formity to the worldly, which religion condemns. To be singular, and unsocial, and obstinate, are characters not to be desired; but which, when virtue requires, must be borne. If we cannot otherwise pay what we owe, it is the call of virtue.

In order to perceive and obey this call, consult your own understanding. Some are dragged by fashion into expensive courses, while every expence is a reluctant homage to an idol, for which they have no inward reverence, and in whose rites they find no pleasure. Let us commune with our own hearts,

What is the consequence of being unfashionable? I am censured, and ridiculed, and despised. But what is the consequence of being unjust? My own heart condemns me. Poverty comes like an armed man, with all his terrors, and without any of his consolations. If the appearance of pover-

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ty can scarcely be supported, the reality will be insupportable.

But what shall I answer to friends and neighbours, who often recommend fashionable expence, and sometimes upbraid me? I will respect their kind intentions, and canvass their advices and maxims, not with a morose or angry spirit. The want of fashionable ornaments and meats does not take away my appetite, nor is my sleep less pleasant: it does not prevent my real friends from visiting me, nor is their welcome less hearty, nor our mutual enjoyment less complete. The want of ornaments is censured; but having them does not exempt from censure; for taste in such matters is capricious and censorious. A man's expence should be proportioned to his income. It is better to keep far within than to exceed a little. It is easy to advance, but difficult to retrench. It is prudent to lay up for a time of need. It is pleasant to give to him that needeth.

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With these and the like arguments, theirs may be combated. Difference of opinion after all is a slight matter. But the management of what I possess is properly my own concern; I must give an account of that management to God; it will have an effect on the sentence to be passed at judgement. It is not, therefore, the opinions of others which I ought to follow, but the dictates of my own heart.

‘Keep an account of your expences,’ says Richard Baxter, ‘and peruse them before a fast or a sacrament, and ask conscience how it judgeth of them; yea ask some prudent holy friend whether such proportions are allowable before God, and will be comfortable to you in the day of your extremity. If you are but willing to be cured, such means as these will not be in vain.’

Conversing with a prudent friend is a useful mean. Oeconomy is a matter of experience

experience upon which the young especially need instruction. The principle of justice in their minds is unfolded, and the practice of it established by the concurrence and approbation of one in whom they confide. Next to the testimony of our own conscience, and the spirit of God bearing witness with our spirits; the testimony of a friend is the best defence against sinful conformity to the world. The secrecy which some affect with regard to their affairs, declining all communications on the subject, and disguising it to their own minds, often leads to distresses which timely counsel might have prevented. There are false but plausible maxims which a friend might unveil; there are propensities seemingly generous which he might check; there are consequences which he might foresee, and in the spirit of meekness foretell; there is a sense of justice at the bottom of the heart which he might rouse, and provoke to break through every obstacle.

Feeble

Feeble-minded persons cannot quit the fashion even at the call of justice. It were therefore to be wished, that they whose rank and circumstances entitle them to give fashions would give moderate ones. At present moderation becomes all ranks. Let the high set an example. The dismissing delicate and costly superfluities will dismiss nearly as much anxiety as pleasure. Superfluous servants and artists will find employment in the defence of their country. The reproach of singularity is not to be dreaded, for what the great do is imitated of course; nor the reproach of poverty, for they are known to be rich; and the thing most dreaded in a plain dress, a temperate table, or a humble equipage, is the imputation of poverty. There are many innocent and useful ways of bestowing the money that is saved. The splendor of such a reformation is great, and the sacrifice is small: You preserve the reputation of wealth, and acquire the praise of virtue. Much praise from the friends of virtue is due

due to the great who are temperate and beneficent : their beneficence is a pattern to the rich, and their temperance to all.

Examples of excess, on the other hand, have the worst effect. No income can support negligence and expensiveness. If examples should be very frequent of rich people exceeding their income, and paying only a small proportion of what they owe; is there not reason to fear that the practice will descend? You may trace the practice of profane swearing from the high to the lowest ranks ; adultery has made the same progress; infidelity, the handmaid of guilt, is following apace : and is there not reason to fear that the poor and unprincipled will follow the pattern of injustice? The rich will suffer in the end, for their revenue depends on the industry and integrity of the husbandman and the merchant.

3. VAIN-GLORY must be checked for the sake of justice. Fashions draw on many who know them to be absurd; but vain-glory is a passion for those trifles, and a desire to be distinguished by means of them. This passion is very contemptible even in those who can afford to gratify it; but in those who cannot, it must needs be sacrificed.

Associating with the rich and affecting equality with them, are common symptoms of vain-glory. 'The table of a ruler is dangerous, and his delicacies are snares. Burden not thyself above thy power while thou livest, and have no fellowship with one that is richer and mightier than thyself.'

The vain-glorious impoverish themselves by giving to the rich; giving time and labour which should be employed in their own affairs; giving entertainments which derange their domestic oeconomy;
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giving costly presents which might have done good to themselves, and the loss of which their needy families regret; while those who receive them, need them not, and cannot comprehend why they are given, and wish to decline them, and sometimes perhaps laugh the giver to scorn. Solomon says, *He that giveth to the rich shall surely come to want.* Whatever the motive be for giving to the rich, want is the consequence. Some have carried this folly to a deathbed; and instead of their rightful heir or the poor, have bequeathed their money to the rich, who had no right to it, and no need of it.

Vain-glory, like other passions, endeavours to justify itself, 'That such an article of expence can be well afforded. An extraordinary expence may be indulged at times by saving at other times. Some costly things are permanent and need to be purchased but once. Purchasing every thing the best in its kind is upon the whole

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the cheapest course. A good appearance may be made at a small expence. A man may have a spirit above his income. One who has great friends must appear genteel at any rate, and they will do for him.'

These maxims need to be reviewed. One method of putting them to the test is to pay for superfluities immediately: your passion for superfluities is too strong if you cannot suppress it till you have money to purchase them. Whether such an article of expence can be well afforded, is a question not to be decided by the sudden impulse of desire. One extraordinary expence either involves many others, or exhibits a ridiculous mixture of ostentation and penuriousness. The very costly things are probably not very necessary. Purchasing every thing at the highest rate is evidently a dictate not of prudence but of pride. A good appearance at small expence is entitled to some praise, but in most cases it is safer to lay aside an appearance which

which is kept up with difficulty and hazard; it is exchanging an artificial for a real character. If a man has a spirit above his income, it is an evil spirit. However necessary it may seem to appear genteel, it is still more necessary to be just. The favours of the great may deceive, their wealth usually goes to support their greatness, and their favour is most readily obtained by those who are not wholly at their mercy.

The pleasure in sumptuous possessions is flight, 'beholding them with the eye.' It is felt in looking at them the first time, and in showing them to a stranger; but it is easily discomposed. If they be above your rank or revenue, the feeling of inconsistency takes away your pleasure. If they be unpaid, looking at them calls up the painful remembrance. That remembrance is a dead fly in the precious ointment, it takes away the relish of the banquet, and the poor man's dinner of herbs is envied. *Be not made a beggar by banquet-*

ing upon borrowing, when thou hast nothing in thy purse.

One object of vain-glory is to attract notice. They consider what others will think and say of them, and please themselves with the admiration of the people. They might consider what the wise think; or, if they will needs descend, what tradesmen think, whose bills are unpaid, when they see their labour ostentatiously displayed, and what servants think whose wages are unpaid while they fill up the retinue.

The vain are apt to exceed in the number of servants; but even they who can afford a numerous retinue feel inconveniences in it, and that they are not always served well in proportion to the number of their servants. Those who need to retrench can scarce think of a fitter article. Domestic early discern the straitening of circumstances; their reflections and murmurs are illiberal and galling. By discharging

charging the superfluous ones, a load of care is thrown off. By doing part of the work which was done by others, the cheerfulness which attends activity takes place of the languor which attends on idleness. Domestic tranquillity is got in exchange for outward show, and conscious rectitude for unmeaning admiration.

Vain-glory, though it renders a character less respectable, is often connected with good humour and benevolence, seldom with deliberate and deep iniquity. There is therefore hope of correcting it. Let the man who contracts debt to purchase ornaments observe the light in which any other man appears who does the same. Let him attend to his own feelings when the conversation turns on bankruptcy, or on the ways which lead to it; and let him inquire why that subject is avoided by the polite in the company of one who is walking in those ways. Let him compare the pleasure of making a figure with the pain

of being in debt. Let him admit that pain. It tends to undeceive and to reclaim. The debtor who feels it not is lost to righteousness.

The manners and maxims which prevail render it particularly necessary to consult conscience in matters of expence. When it is observed in company, that such a one's expence is great, it is commonly turned off with this reflection, 'He knows his own affairs best, and to be sure would not undertake such works, nor affect such state, unless he could afford it.' Nobody will admonish him, for it is the fashionable maxim not to speak on disagreeable subjects. Thus he is left to himself, and called upon to exercise his own judgement.

One possessed of an estate is often reminded of the rank it gives, and of the things it can afford. Flatterers are listened to and expences multiplied. If however his possession be less in reality than it
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is in appearance, and if by straining to keep up a rank he be still reducing it, the consequence is felt at last. The morning which shone bright is clouded ; a storm breaks out, and he can no longer look with pleasure on his pleasant fields. Attachment to a paternal inheritance is natural and strong, but the incessant importunate calls of justice loosen that attachment. Attachment to life is natural, but pain makes us willing to resign it.

4. GENEROSITY must be checked when it would incroach on justice. A generous mind may be tempted, especially when young, to make this encroachment. The excess of a disposition confessedly good is seldom dreaded ; acts of generosity give inward pleasure, and they are praised by men ; selfishness and avarice are ridiculed and satirised more than injustice ; the ordinary strain of conversation and of religious instruction is in praise of generosity ; for

one sermon you read or hear on justice, you read and hear many on benevolence; some moral writers make the whole of virtue to consist in benevolent and kind affections. The unwary may be tempted either on the one hand to despair of becoming virtuous, or on the other to exceed in generosity. I call it an excess which disables a man from paying his debt.

It may therefore be of use to reflect, that we are under a stronger and more indispensable obligation to be just than to be generous. Society may subsist without generosity, but not without justice. If generous actions be highly praised, unjust ones are severely punished. If we have acted unjustly, our own hearts condemn us; the punishment of human laws is added; religion discovers still more severe and awful sanctions. These reflections tend not to extinguish generosity, but to set it in its own place.

A virtue which belongs to particular circumstances requires discretion in the practice. In the practice of generosity it is of use to discern the proper objects and occasions, and the length it is fit to go. Without attending to these, one may squander money without doing good, or inspiring gratitude, or exciting admiration, or attaining in any degree the merit and the praise of generosity. The parting with money inconsiderately, so far from being approved, is a proverbial folly. Some make a flash of affected generosity, who are not very scrupulous in paying what they owe, nor about fraudulent courses, provided they be gainful. But the man who knows the labour of getting honestly, the pains in making his goods responsible, the caution not to overcharge, the losses that are sustained from fear of taking an undue advantage; who knows what it is to pay the full price of what he buys, and to leave no room for challenge in the minds of others or in his own; who knows the
difficulty

difficulty of getting what is due to him, how long he must wait, and how often he must lose: the man who knows all this, knows the true worth and the proper use of money.

Generosity in one who has wealth which he did not earn, is often injudicious and useless; in one who has grown rich by dishonest means, it is hypocrisy and self-deceit; in one who has acquired his wealth by honest industry, it is the fruit of many days, and thoughts, and difficulties; and he will be apt to exert it for some good purpose.

5. COMPASSION must be bounded by justice. We are required to do justly and to love mercy. Let the love of mercy be cherished; and, when justice permits, let its dictates be obeyed. Compassion is amiable, even when extreme; and the heart which was never deceived by a false claim is

is probably a hard one. Still it is the part of a wise man to examine the claims that are made on his compassion. By rejecting false ones, he can indulge compassion with more effect, and it partakes more of the nature of virtue. In order to render it perfectly virtuous, he must refrain from giving away what is due to his creditors or to those of his own house.

I am aware, that what is now said of generosity and compassion, is laid hold of by the avaritious and hard-hearted. Let such remember, that compassion is a law of our nature; that want of generosity in the rich is a moral defect; that Christ enjoins alms. They are the tokens of a benevolent and willing mind, and as such will be rewarded at the resurrection of the just. *They shall have judgement without mercy, who have shewed no mercy.*

To the poor it seems discouraging, that the rewards of that day are bestowed chiefly

ly for acts of goodness, from which they are restrained by a sense of justice. But the Lord seeth not as man seeth. The law, which forbids covetousness and evil thoughts, rewards kind affections. A cup of cold water or a friendly visit, are accepted as evidences of love, when we can give no other. *For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, not according to that he hath not.* 2 Cor. viii. 12.

S E R M O N

S E R M O N XVIII.

Rom. xiii. 8.

Owe no man any thing.

6. **F**RRIENDSHIP may prompt a man to involve himself by loan or suretyship.

The maxims of the wise sometimes appear contradictory. *An honest man is surety for his neighbour. A man void of understanding becometh surety.* Maxims apparently so opposite arrest attention, and the present case demands it. To lend and to be surety are offices of friendship, which a good man imposes on himself; without them, human affairs would not go on well. They are offices of friendship, however, in which a good man is apt to exceed,

exceed; and therefore warnings against that excess are given. *Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts. If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee? Suretyship hath undone many of a good estate, and shaken them like a wave of the sea. Mighty men hath it driven from their houses, so that they wandered among strange nations.* The warning is repeated in every age. Almost every individual has at some time of his life suffered by trusting, or lending, or suretyship. To the wicked, these are arguments for hardening the heart against friendship. Of opposite counsels, they adopt the one which seems to favour them, and wrest it to their own destruction. *None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.* These warnings are for the wise and good, to guard them against a folly, which good men are most apt to commit, which is perhaps more nearly allied to goodness than any other, which we condemn with reluctance;

reluctance, which we deeply lament: but still it is a folly, which may prove in its consequences to the last degree distressing.

In lending and becoming surety, two things should be attended to; the persons whom we trust, and our own ability to sustain the loss. If it be to serve a friend, and for a sum, the loss of which we are able to sustain, the case is clear, *lose thy money, for thy brother and thy friend.*

Requests are sometimes made by the undeserving. They descend to all the mean-ness of complaint and supplication, and pledge themselves to repay with asseverations and oaths. These are snares into which a good man may fall. He thinks of the kind of distress which would make himself descend so low, and of the sacred obligation which he himself annexes to an asseveration and an oath. He discovers perhaps too late, that all was simulation; and

and that abject fawning entreaty, and oaths where their sanction is not required, are symptoms of hypocrisy. *Many, when a thing was lent them, reckoned it to be found, and put them to trouble that helped them. Till he hath received, he will kiss a man's hand, and for his neighbour's money he will speak submissively; but when he should repay, he will prolong the time, and return words of grief, and complain of the times.—The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again.*

One who has been imposed upon in this way, is apt to harden his heart, and to pass from extreme confidence to extreme suspicion. In an evil hour, the sources of his benevolence are dried up. Want may betray him into those ways of deceit, by which he himself was deceived.

THE other thing to be attended to, in lending or becoming surety, is our ability to sustain the loss. The probability that

we will not have it to sustain, is a thing more commonly attended to. And, without doubt, in the great lottery of suretyship many escape; but some escape narrowly, and some, contrary to expectation, and contrary to probability, have the debt to pay. It is therefore prudent, before striking hands, to think if we be able to pay. This precaution is suggested by Solomon. *If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee?* It would be wrong by any hazardous project of gain to yourself to run the risk of ruin; and it is wrong to run that risk for the sake of another.

7. THE dictates of natural affection must be checked, when they encroach on justice.

One may be inclined to indulge his family in expensive habits; and in maxims of pride and sloth, which are wrong at a-

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ny rate, and very wrong when he cannot easily afford it. If he conceals his real circumstances, the tranquillity of his own mind is ruffled; when they come to be known, his weak indulgence is requited with reproach. His wife, to whom the detail of oeconomy is committed, feels hourly the inconveniences of a tottering credit. Children complain of an education ill suited to their rank, of delusive prospects from which they must turn their eye, and of habits unfriendly to humble industry. Mutual reproaches banish domestic peace.

Perhaps a greater evil ensues. The virtue of the family is shaken. When the head of a family becomes false and treacherous, it is difficult for the wife and children to retain their integrity. It is rare. Plans of fraud are unanimously adopted, by which they live in sloth upon money with which debt should be paid.

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Let a man reveal to his family his real circumstances, and establish an order conformed to them. If the reforming of evil habits costs a struggle, it is the struggle of virtue. For a zeal somewhat severe in the cause of justice, he can forgive himself. When order is re-established, and justice flows in an even course; meekness and domestic peace return.

Pride is an evil disease; labour to remove it from the minds of children. Expose to them the folly of family pride. It is the disease of insignificant empty minds. They place the point of honour in idleness or useless work, renounce the comforts of social connection, with those whom God has made of one blood, and account things that are honest dishonourable; because they know the names of their forefathers, and the figures that are painted on their tombs.

8. PLEASURES innocent in themselves may prove too costly. From that moment, they cease to be innocent.

The man, who takes pleasure in improving the fields, in making corn and grass to grow, in giving bread to labourers, and raising trees for posterity, seems to be usefully as well as pleasantly employed ; the reflection of usefulness adds to the pleasure. Still there is danger of excess, of giving too much to ornament, of launching out too far of a sudden, of adopting improbable and impracticable schemes, of trusting men who have much to say, and who promise great things, of neglecting to keep regular accounts, and to acquire the skill and give the attention which are necessary to success.

The man of letters seems to have chosen pleasures suited to a reasonable being. He is improving and enlarging his own mind, he enlightens those with whom he
converses,

converses, and his writings may instruct posterity. Even the thirst for knowledge must not be quenched at the expence of justice. A rich man may prefer a favourite study to wealth; but one who is in debt must not affect contempt for money, and the means of acquiring it. He is accountable to his creditors for what he might save, or gain in any honest way. Immersed in contemplation, he dreams that he is only a spectator upon earth, that all he has to do, is to observe and speculate; but he ought to know, that 'in the theatre of human life, it is only for God and angels to be spectators.' A man may act his part well, and obtain the approbation of God and men; though he be ignorant of the stars, and elements, and fate of empires; but if he be ignorant of what he owes, and prefers a favourite study to the means of paying it; he ceases to act his part well, and forfeits the approbation of God and men.

Even devout pleasure must be bounded. One may contract such a taste for prayers and sacraments and religious books and pious fellowships, as to neglect worldly affairs, and introduce disorder the seed of injustice. To a mind elevated with devout joy, it is painful to descend, and Peter's desire was natural to tabernacle in the Mount; but obedience is the test of love.

In some former ages it might be necessary to enlarge this argument. In the present age a taste for devotion is rare. It is an argument more to my purpose, that a mixture of devotion is a mean of justice. It weans the heart from costly pleasures and pursuits; it binds the conscience with every moral tie; it inspires contentment and humility. A worldling multiplies business, grasps at every bargain where aught is to be made, and overloads his mind with the cares of this life. He spends the day of sacred rest in transacting bills and accounts and mercantile correspondence. If
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ever he enters the house of God, his meditation is nevertheless on the state of markets, the course of exchange, and the means of recovering bad debts; the world is in his heart, and devotion cannot enter. A multiplicity of affairs tends to confusion. Man is a pilgrim upon earth, his business is to avoid and remove, not to raise obstructions by the way.

The due mixture of temporal and spiritual concerns is a matter of importance in the oeconomy of human life. Let worldly affairs be attended to from a sense of duty. Mingle devout retirement. Consider your latter end. Buy as though you possessed not. Use this world as not abusing it.

9. AN immoderate desire of wealth leads to injustice. *He that hasteneth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty will come upon him.* He who

hasteneth to be rich, who is not satisfied with moderate profits in a safe course, but will needs project and overtrade, who prefers the methods of growing rich by chance to the methods of growing rich by industry, who prefers the accumulation to the enjoyment of riches; he who in these ways hastens to be rich *hath an evil eye*. He envies those who are richer than himself, and with-holds what he has from his own family that he may lay it out in hazardous adventures. *He considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.* A little consideration would shew him that poverty is the ordinary consequence of hastening to be rich. What is the consequence for example of adventuring in trade beyond what your capital admits of and justifies? The prospect of gain proportioned to the adventure allures, but demands often come before your returns—the demands of justice which can be answered. Attend to the history of those who have failed in the pursuit of wealth:

wealth: the most frequent cause of their failure is hastening to be rich by overtrading. Attend to the history of those who have succeeded: the most frequent cause of their success is prudent moderate persevering industry. The methods of growing rich by chance are still more deceitful. The number is great of those who have ruined their fortunes by game, lottery, wagering, betting, and stock-jobbing. Gaming is discouraged by the laws; it is therefore against the duty of a citizen as well as against prudence. Lottery is permitted, but it seems worthy the consideration of lawgivers whether it be not for the public weal to discourage the ways of hastening to be rich, and to encourage the ways of patient industry. It is enough for us that hastening to be rich is a disposition condemned by the word of God, as unfriendly to contentment, to the enjoyment of what we have, and to the most likely as well as the best means of increasing it.

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They who are entrusted with other men's money need to be particularly cautioned against the temptation of hastening to be rich. Let young men to whom such a trust is committed consider it as sacred and inviolable : To hazard your own is imprudence ; to hazard other men's is injustice.

They who succeed in accumulating are not always strictly just. The desire of accumulating increases with the heap. They injure their creditors by delay, not because they have no money, but because they chuse to make up a sum with it.

10. SLOTH must be conquered. It is fatal to justice as well as to every other virtue.

The slothful is brother to him that is a great waster. He is equally exposed to poverty, and to all the temptations the poor are under to be unjust. Sloth is incident

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to those whose affairs begin to be deranged. When an effort of diligence is most necessary, they are most averse from making it. The necessity is felt, but delays are invented. Address and dexterity are used to put off business, to avoid a settlement, and to shift the subject. He exhausts the patience of his creditors, the affection of his friends, and the candour of good men; he sinks in the esteem of the world and in his own esteem. The mind cannot be wholly unoccupied, but it takes up with trifles. The amusements of children, the news of the day, idle books, and idle talk about other men's matters, are the occupations of the slothful. The sight of disorder is unpleasant, and from his own matters he turns away.

The sad consequences of sloth it is easy to fortell, but it is not so easy to prescribe a cure. The workings of self-deceit, the delusion of vain hopes, the unmanly pleasure of indolence, and the power of habit,

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counterwork every remedy. If sloth be beginning in a young mind, arguments may be used, the consequence fortold, and warning given; the sense of justice may be addressed, ambition roused, friendly aid and reproof administered: peradventure he may shake off sloth and return to the duties and pleasures of a man. But if the vigour of life be past, and sloth has taken full possession, there is no hope.

11. FALSE shame must be combated. The discipline of shame is delicate. Its power in some minds is great. When rightly disciplined it is a barrier against strong propensities to evil. When that discipline is neglected, it obstructs many good propensities. Often it obstructs the propensity to justice. Many are ashamed to eat and dress and travel and furnish their houses as they can afford. Some are ashamed to ask what is due to them, and to vindicate their own rights. A few are prevented

prevented by shame from availing themselves of their talents and opportunities to rise in the world above all temptation to injustice.

There is one critical situation where shame is strongly felt. Disorder prevails, and debt exceeds the fund for payment. The course which justice prescribes is an immediate bankruptcy, fair open and avowed. Shame obstructs this course, till debts multiply and the fund for paying them melts away.

12. RESTITUTION is the last sacrifice to be made to justice. There are two cases, the case of things found, and of things gotten unjustly.

The first is easy. The sense of right and wrong operates without interruption from shame or remorse; it is aided by self-approbation and the praise of men. Accordingly

dingly many are at pains to discover the owner of what they have found. Temptation may indeed spring up from the sudden impulse of covetousness. The poor man who had found a treasure and was tempted by his family to conceal it, acted with a becoming sense of justice and a prudent jealousy over himself, when he instantly called in his neighbours to witness what was found, and to assist him in discovering the owner.

The second case is of things gotten unjustly. The obligation to restore them is clear. The reasons against it are easily answered; but reasons are invented in this case as in many others, not so much to determine a man's conduct as to justify a determination already made. If an unjust man ever resolves in good earnest to restore, it will probably be owing to a view of danger awful and irremediable, *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish*. With this view full before him and penetrating his
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his soul, difficulties vanish ; he willingly embraces poverty and penitential sorrow and the returning favour of Almighty.

While restitution is made let reputation be saved if possible ; it is a defence against future temptation.

SUCH are the sacrifices to be made to justice. They are costly ; but the blessings are in proportion great.

To be out of debt is accounted a part of happiness. Debt haunts the mind, a conversation about justice troubles it, the sight of a creditor fills it with confusion, even the sanctuary is not a place of refuge. *The borrower is servant to the lender.* A life at another man's table is not to be counted for a life. It is mean to flatter the rich. It is humiliating to be the object of pity. To be the slave of unattainable desires is to be despicable and wretched. Independence
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so essential to the virtues and pleasures of a man, independence can only be maintained by setting bounds to your desires, and owing no man any thing.

Habits of boundless expence undermine and destroy the virtues even in a mind where they seemed to dwell. It becomes difficult and at last impossible to pay punctually. At the first breach of a promise compunction is felt. When a man of sensibility thinks of the low rate at which his word must henceforth pass, he is little in his own eye: difficulties prompt him to study deceiving as an art, and at last he lies to his creditors without a blush. How desolate and woeful does his mind appear, now that the fence of truth is broken down!

Friendship is next dissolved. He felt it once, and he now insinuates himself by means of sentiments and professions which were once sincere. He seizes the moment
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of unsuspecting affection to ensnare the friends of his youth, borrowing money which he will never pay, and binding them for debts which they must hereafter answer. At this rate he sells the virtuous pleasure of loving and being beloved. He swallows up the provision of aged parents, and the portion of sisters and brethren. —The loss of truth is followed by the loss of humanity.

His calls are still importunate. He proceeds to fraud, and walks on precipices. Ingenuity, which in a better cause might have illustrated his name, is exerted to evade the law, to deceive the world, to cover poverty with the appearance of wealth, to sow unobserved the seed of fraud. Fictitious bills, dark conveyances, mysteries of iniquity—*my soul come not thou into their secrets, unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united.*

As bankruptcy approaches, temptations thicken. He makes a last grasp with his expiring credit, and takes what he can once more from friends and neighbours, from the ignorant and unsuspicious; purchasing goods at any rate from all who will trust him, and selling them for immediate payment at an undervalue: thus he ripens all for the day of bankruptcy. Even to a man of principle, upon whom guiltless calamity has brought that evil day, it costs an effort to stop when he ought, to keep nothing back, to be impartial. To the unprincipled man that day is the triumph of iniquity. He surrenders nothing which he can secret, tramples on human laws, and takes God's name in vain. He is partial to his creditors, insults those whom he has injured, and piques himself on the tranquillity, with which he can bear to be called a villain.

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One would think that when the bustle of affairs is over, painful reflections must arise, on friends whom he has deceived; on relations whom he has brought to want; on neighbours whose kindness he has abused; on the savings of the frugal labourer, which he has seized, frustrating their hopes of temperate honest joy; on the staff of the aged which he has withdrawn, casting them upon the cold and scanty arm of public charity; on the portion of the poor, the widow, and the fatherless, upon which he has laid his sacrilegious hand. But his heart is hardened against the relentings of humanity, he reaps the harvest he has sown, and proudly riots on the wages of iniquity.

Fraudulent bankruptcies, which the laws of men cannot punish, are intimations of a judgement to come. All must appear at the tribunal of God. Kindred and friends and neighbours whom he deceived, the frugal labourer from whom he withdrew the staff

of age, the widow and the orphan upon whose portion he laid his sacrilegious hand, will rise up in the judgement against him.

PEACE at the latter end is the portion of the upright. The pleasures of iniquity are but for a moment. The splendour of extravagance fades. The man of fraud goes down in disgrace. The oppressor dies detested. Their memories rot.

Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in the dust.

To live and die an honest man is a worthy object of ambition. It is within your reach. It smoothes the passage through life and through death. It is a rich and sacred legacy to your children. *I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*

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It will be said, for we are not ignorant of the censure you pass on preachers of righteousness, it will be said that this is not preaching the gospel. We respect a prejudice founded on zeal for the gospel. If ever that zeal be without knowledge we dread and lament the consequences. Allow me to ask in the spirit of meekness, for what end do we assemble here? Is it not reverently to inquire into the will of our Maker? And what doth the Lord thy God require of thee O man, but to do justly? We assemble here to worship; and who is the man that shall ascend the holy hill, and receive the blessing from on high? He that walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness. Our business upon earth is to prepare for judgement: The division to be made then is into the righteous and the wicked. Heaven is the object of our hope, and no unrighteousness can enter there. You bear the name of Christ, and profess to be disciples of that JUST

ONE ; and do you still lend a deaf ear to the laws of justice ? It is a common reproach, that the greatest professors of piety are least to be trusted in matters of truth and justice : we hope the reproach is unmerited : if in any instance it be merited, your profession of Christianity is a lie ; you say, though not in words, *we will not have this man to reign over us.* Let the honour of the name we bear, the interest of religion in the world, and our own highest interest, be opposed to a prejudice which seems to defend, but in fact betrays, the cause of Christ.

To owe no man any thing is essential to happiness and virtue ; to a good name and a peaceful dwelling among men ; to the comforts of devotion, and an inheritance in that land where righteousness dwells.

S E R M O N X I X.

2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8.

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course, I have keep the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge will give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

WE here behold a Christian contemplating the near approach of death. I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. The reflections which arise, I have fought a good fight, I have fi-

nished my course, I have kept the faith. His well grounded hope, Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge will give me at that day. The extent of that hope, not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

I am ready to be offered. The apostle was in prison at Rome, daily expecting to be put to death by Nero. This he considers as an offering and a sacrifice, a seal which he must put to his testimony, a filling up, as he elsewhere expresses it, of that which is behind in the afflictions of Christ for his body's sake, which is the church. In this calm and generous light does the Apostle look on martyrdom. At his first answer, he was deserted by his friends. *No man stood with me, but all men forsook me.* It is an illustrious proof of Christianity, and of the powers of a world to come, its distinguishing doctrine, that under every

ry discouragement, he could possess his soul in patience.

The time of my departure is at hand. A Christian looks on death, not as the boundary of his hope and the end of his being, not as a time when doubts arise and despair overwhelms ; it is the time of his departure only from the land where he now sojourns. To Paul it was a departure from the prison house, from labours and strifes and deaths, from a foreign land where he was absent from the Lord.

I have fought a good fight. He calls to remembrance the former days when he endured great fights of affliction, and stood in jeopardy every hour ; when he contended with flesh and blood, with principalities, and powers, and spiritual wickedness. *I have fought a good fight.* It was in the cause of truth and virtue, in the cause of Jesus the Apostle fought ; it was the good fight of faith in which he overcame,

came, and in which we now behold him overcoming the world, and looking forward to the prize of victory.

The Christian life is a warfare. This world is not a land of peace and security to the Christian. It is an enemy's country where we must watch against the assaults of temptation, and defend and maintain our innocence.

I have finished my course. To obtain the prize at a public race was in Greece an object of ambition: they prepared for it by severe exercise and abstinence: the conqueror received a crown, and universal applause, and entered his own city in triumph. The Apostle intimates, in language then well understood, that as a Christian he had a race to run. He had prepared and kept under his body, he had run *not as uncertainly*, not erring from the course marked out by which the prize was forfeited, he run so as to obtain. Now when
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in fight of the goal and of the crown, he speaks of his course as already finished.

This is another image of persevering activity by which the Christian life is represented. We are running in a race, where it is dangerous to slacken or change our course, or to sink under weariness and discouragement ; where we must not expect rest and honour till the course be finished. *Every man that striveth for the victory is temperate in all things. They do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible.*

I have kept the faith. I have been faithful to my trust. It was no ordinary trust which the Lord committed to this Apostle. *He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and Kings and the children of Israel ; for I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.* He was not disobedient to the heavenly voice. He conferred not
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with flesh and blood. He made full proof of his ministry, and kept the faith, when opposition and bonds and martyrdom were the immediate consequences of his fidelity.

In every view, the christian life is active. We are here considered as servants to whom some work is committed in charge and trust. They who are faithful in the few things with which they are now entrusted, will receive a crown from the Master of the universe and be made rulers over many things.

OBSERVE, before you contemplate the crown, that it is the reward of faithfulness, the prize of victory. It is not laid up for cowards who shrink back in the day of battle; not for the slothful who stop short in their course, and rest and fettle on things behind and temporal; not for you who are careless and unfaithful in the things

things now committed to you. The saints, who look forward with hope at the approach of death, look backward too, and reap comfort from their works of righteousness. Job reflects with comfort on his justice and mercy in the days of prosperity, and when all is gone holds fast his integrity, and will not let it go. Samuel, when he was old and gray-headed, appealed to all the congregation for the justice and integrity with which he had judged. *Remember now I pray thee, O Lord, said Hezekiah, when he received the message of death, remember how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.* The Apostle draws comfort from the same source. Jesus lift up his eyes to heaven and said, *Father the hour is come. I have glorified thee on earth. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do: and now O Father glorify thou me.* The hour of death is come. View the mind of Jesus in this hour. He reflects on the work assigned

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ed him by God, and which he has now accomplished. To him it is the hour of prayer and of approaching glory. He has taught us by his own example how to live and how to die.

Henceforth, now that my warfare is accomplished, *is laid up*, without the possibility of being lost, *a crown of righteousness*. Earthly crowns are often gained by injustice, and the kingdoms of this world are habitations of cruelty; but in kingdoms prepared for the faithful righteousness dwells: *Which the Lord the righteous judge will give*. The judge of all the earth will do what is right. He will dispense those crowns in exact proportion to your works of righteousness. Which the Lord will give. Still it is a gift. Even the labours and merit of an Apostle bear no proportion to the eternal recompense. *It is your Father's good will to give you the kingdom*. When you receive it,

it, you will imitate the heavenly worship, and cast your crowns before the throne of God, and ascribe to him the kingdom and the power and the glory.

Not to me only, but to all them that love his appearing.

What is it to love his appearing? It accords not with the love of the world, for at his appearing the world and all things in it shall be dissolved. It accords not with the love of sensible pleasure, for in the resurrection they hunger not nor thirst. It accords not with the love of life, for as that which is sown is not quickened unless it die, we must all undergo a similar change before the appearing of Jesus.

But what is it to love his appearing? It is to love sublime and awful contemplation. To see the heavens on fire and the elements melt. To hear the trump of
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God, and to see the dead rise. To see the judge on the throne of his glory, and all nations gathered before him. To see in him a friend for whom you have waited,

To love his appearing, is to love the full indulgence of devout affection and desire. To see him whom your soul loveth. To see him as he is, and to remember with other feelings than a memorial can inspire, how he loved you and gave himself for you. For those pleasures a Christian waits, and keeps his heart, and suffers it not to be contaminated with baser pleasures. The night may be long, there may be thick darkness; it may be cold and comfortless, storms may beat upon your tabernacle: you still wait for his appearing, more than they that watch for the morning, with more earnest longing expectation, and with the same strong assurance that the day will dawn, that the Sun of righteousness will arise.

Behold

Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me. To love his appearing is to love the recompense of reward. Rejoice ye who now follow Jesus, bearing your cross in meekness and patience and humility; rejoice, for great is your reward in heaven. In that day Jesus will confess you before his Father, and bring to light all your works of righteousness. In that day, the prisoner and the afflicted, the poor and the comfortless, the widow and the orphan who have been in every generation, will rise up and acknowledge, before the general assembly of created beings, all who sympathized with them, and took them up, and cared for them in this wilderness; will plead in your behalf, and call you blessed. The judge of all the earth will re-echo and confirm the blessing. *Come ye blessed of my Father inherit the kingdom prepared for you.*

The glories of that kingdom we cannot yet fully declare. *There shall be no*

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more curse. There shall be no more death. God shall wipe all tears from your eyes. *I will be your God, and ye shall be my people. I am your exceeding great reward.* To enjoy God, to be filled with his presence, to be one with him—We may speak of it till the thought be too big for utterance, and think till the heart can conceive no more, and rejoice in the hope of joy unspeakable.

HERE we know in part, but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. It is the worthiest exercise of the understanding here to trace the perfections of God in his works, and in his ways, and in his Christ : but here the understanding is veiled with mortality ; and after our farthest researches into nature we acknowledge with Job, *Lo these are part of thy ways ;* and after our deepest thoughts of Providence, we still expostulate with the Prophet, *Why do the*
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the wicked prosper, and why are all they happy that deal very treacherously? And when we have done our utmost to know the love of Christ, we conclude with the Apostle that *it passeth knowledge*. To love his appearing is to love perfect knowledge. —To see the mystery of God finished, to contemplate in its source that everlasting love of which human nature is the object, to review the history of human nature from first to last, to ponder the concluding scene of justice and judgement, to see Jesus deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and be subject to him, that God may be all in all. Amen.

S E R M O N XX*.

1 Cor. xv. 29.

*Else what shall they do which are baptised
for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?
Why are they then baptised for the dead?*

I Understand these words to refer to the future union of virtuous friends, as connected with the doctrine of the resurrection, and expected by those who profess the faith of the gospel. An attentive inquiry

* This Sermon, written by my friend Dr Thomas Somerville of Jedburgh, is inserted for his explication of a difficult text, and the consolations founded upon it.

inquiry into the subjects and arguments of the Apostle in the context, is necessary, in order to judge of the evidence and propriety of this interpretation, unsupported by the authority of any ancient or modern expositor.

THE manifest intention of the Apostle in this chapter is, to establish the Corinthians in the firm belief of a resurrection from the dead. The possibility of a resurrection was denied by the Sadducees; and the nature and circumstances of the resurrection of the body were assailed with various objections by the Epicurean philosophers: Both of whom, with that unaccountable zeal, which is often found in men of sceptical principles, attempted to bereave the Corinthians of the most pleasant hope of a Christian, derived from the belief of future existence. With a view to these two objections, the arguments, and

answers of the Apostle in this chapter are constructed.

CONCERNING the *first* of these, viz. the certainty of a resurrection, he treats from the beginning of the chapter to the 35th verse: The objections to the resurrection of the body he takes up at the 35th verse, and carries on the answer to the end of the chapter. The words of my text make a part of the first section of argument, or that which relates to the certainty of the resurrection of the body.

The principal argument from which the Apostle infers our resurrection, is the resurrection of Christ, verse 3d and 4th. *For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.* Here is a fact directly

directly to the purpose. The Sadducees denied the possibility of a resurrection; but, if it be true that Christ is risen from the dead, this objection falls to the ground. There is no reasoning against fact. The Apostle, therefore, with propriety, in verses 5, 6, and 7. appeals to the testimony of witnesses, the proper evidence of fact. *And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve. After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren: of whom the greatest part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the Apostles.* Admitting the resurrection of Jesus, the Apostle concludes the dispute to be at an end. It were to the last degree absurd to deny that his followers shall rise also. Verse 12. *Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection from the dead?* He represents these events as so much connected and interwoven, that, upon the supposition that

there was any doubt of the one, he must of necessity renounce the other. Our resurrection is not a separate event, or remote consequence ; but a continuation of the resurrection of Christ. They must stand and fall together.

But how does this connection appear ? By what peculiar affinity is the resurrection of Christ, and that of his followers, so indissolubly united ? It might suffice to answer, that, as the objection of the Sadducees was levelled against the possibility of a resurrection ; the matter of fact, that Christ has risen from the dead, was fully adequate, or commensurate to the objection. But this is not all.

The Apostle next introduces an argument, which ought to have had peculiar influence with those, who were instructed in the principles, and who professed the faith of the gospel. • Jesus Christ is the second
head

head or representative of the human race. As we lost our life by Adam, the first representative, we are to recover it, or be raised from the dead, by the second. It is only by this effect, that the analogy or correspondence between these persons can be complete. Verse. 21, and 22. *For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* This, then, is the main argument. The resurrection of Christ established, that of his disciples follows, as the effect from the cause.

In the course of illustrating this argument from the 12th to the 34th verse, the Apostle intersperses various considerations addressed to feeling, and tending to enforce and corroborate those evidences, which he had already adduced, in order to convince the understanding. Suppose the resurrection of Christ doubtful or uncertain, and consequences ensue most disparaging to the wisdom

wisdom of the Christian, and the integrity of the Apostle. Faith or belief is a vain unprofitable thing: The preaching of the Apostles a laborious imposture. Verse 14, and 15. *And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up, if so be that that the dead rise not.* Consequences most painful to feeling started to view, as described in the 18th, and 19th. verses. To give up the resurrection of Christ were in effect, to consign our departed friends to the shades of eternal oblivion. By removing the prospect of future existence, the case of suffering virtue would, of all others, be the most desperate and deplorable. *Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are, of all men, most miserable.*

Every

Every one, who attends to the operations of his own mind, and the common temper of mankind, must be convinced that affection has a very powerful influence in swaying judgement. Men easily believe what they wish to be true. They are fond and tenacious of those truths which lead to interest and pleasure. And though it were to invert the proper arrangement of argument, to begin with the affections, yet after the understanding has been convinced, every consideration and motive, tending to rivet in the mind, those truths which stand upon the fair foundation of reason, may be applied with good effect. Upon this plan of argument, the apostle, in the preceding verses, and again in the words of my text, pleads in support of the doctrine of a resurrection with the members of the Corinthian church, who, from the combined influence of reason and affection, had been first induced to embrace the Christian faith.

Else

Else, or besides, what shall they do, who are baptised for the dead? Baptism was the external pledge of faith: By being baptised, men were initiated into the profession of Christianity. So that the meaning is the same, as if the Apostle had said, What shall they do who embrace or profess Christianity for the dead, or for the sake of the dead, in the view or expectation of receiving their dead friends again? They lose their labour: they cannot obtain the purpose of their faith. If the dead rise not at all, why are they then baptised for the dead? induced to profess Christianity from the prospect of recovering the dead. Take away the hope of a resurrection, and they lose, as I have already observed, their happiness in this life, and sink into the lowest state of wretchedness. They lose, for ever lose, their departed friends! What remains of Christianity worthy of being retained? What can recommend it to the approbation or desire of a feeling heart?

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To understand more completely the propriety of the Apostle's argument, you will observe, that different considerations are adapted to different tempers ; nay, that the same considerations produce a different degree of influence upon the same minds, according to the vicissitudes of fortune and experience, with which they are exercised. The proclamation of divine mercy sounds melodious in the ears of the man who is pierced with sorrow and agitated with alarm, from the consciousness of deep transgression. How much is he interested in the doctrine of reconciliation through the blood of a Redeemer ! Suppose a man grievously perplexed with the unequal distribution of things in this present life : Suppose that he himself has been the unfortunate victim of oppression, and in vain has solicited the redress due to innocence, from the compassion of his fellow-creatures or the interposition of legal authority : With what transport would he listen to the doctrine of a future tribunal, and of a righteous

teous judge, and an infallible detection of the intentions of men, to be displayed by the everlasting honours of virtue, and the final disgrace and ruin of iniquity. Or, suppose a case directly to the purpose. Go to the house of mourning. Behold a family overwhelmed with the deepest sorrow for the loss of a dear and valuable connection. It is not the fall of fortune or dignity, the neglect of false friends, nor the struggles of adversity, that move their concern. They are incapable of bestowing the most transient reflection upon such little considerations. The extinction of excellence and virtue, an eternal separation from the fondest object of affection, tear the heart with unutterable anguish and despair. *I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live again.* Whence these ravishing sounds? They are the words of Jesus. He invites you to take comfort. He promises you your friends again. Gladly I embrace the messenger of heaven; I will

will be the disciple of Jesus ; I desire to be baptised for the dead. The picture delineated exhibits an exact description of the feeling and temper of the persons to whom the Apostle applies the words of my text : As if he had said, The purpose of your faith shall not be frustrated ; affection shall not be disappointed ; you shall recover your own existence ; you shall receive your friends again.

Thus you see that the question of the Apostle. *Else what shall they do which are baptised for the dead, if the dead rise not at all ? Why are they then baptised for the dead ?* amounts to an implication of the doctrine of a re-union of virtuous friends, as connected with the doctrine of a resurrection from the dead *.

Every

* Few passages of the New Testament have more exercised the ingenuity of critics, or produced greater variety of interpretations, than that which now engages

Every view which revelation presents to us, concerning the future state of good men,

engages our attention. The detail and confutation of these would fill many pages, and could not with propriety be introduced into this discourse. *Vide Crit. Sacr. in loc.*

It is of importance, however, to observe, that as the greatest number of commentators are inclined to admit βαπτίζομαι as referring to baptism, in a literal and not in a metaphorical sense; and νεκρῶν not to those who were to die, or in expectation of dying soon, but to those who were already dead; so the preposition *υπερ* is often found in prophane and sacred authors, in a sense agreeable to the application of it in this discourse. It is used in the sense of *περι*, to denote the subject concerning which a person is speaking or writing; *υπερ τῆς πρὸς Περσας πολέμου Ἰσοκράτης ἐγραψεν*: About or concerning the war against the Persians, Isocrates wrote. Longinus. *Ἡσυχίας δὲ κραζει υπερ τῆς Ἰσραήλ*. Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Rom. ix. 27. See also 2 Cor. i. 7. 8. &c.

Υπερ is also used to signify that connection which is produced by affection or attachment, *υπερ πατρίδος καὶ παιδων* in defence of, or from attachment to their country and children. Lucian. *Ὁς γὰρ ἐκ ἐστὶ καθ' ἡμῶν υπερ ἡμῶν ἐστίν*: For he that is not against us is on our part, Mark ix, 40. See also Acts ix. 16. Rom. viii. 31. 32.

men, suggests additional arguments to confirm this pleasant expectation. Heaven is represented as an improved state, as a social state, and as connected with the conduct and experience of men in the prior scenes of their existence. They who shall be accounted worthy to obtain the resurrection from the dead, can die no more; Luke xx. vers. 35, and 36. They shall hunger no more; Rev. vii. 16. 17. He

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shall

Both these significations of the preposition *υπερ* run into the explication which I have set forth in the above pages. *Οι βαπτίζονται υπερ νεκρων.* They who are baptised in relation to, or concerning the dead—they who are baptised in defence of, or from affection to their departed friends. Motives addressed to the strongest affections of the human heart, self-love and benevolence, recommend the doctrine of the resurrection. Hence the Christian derives consolation under persecution, and the prospect of his own dissolution. Hence also he derives consolation, concerning or in relation to his departed friends. How delightful the hope of a resurrection, not only upon our own account, or in the view of recovering our own existence; but also upon account of our dead friends, and the prospect of being rejoined to them!

shall fashion our bodies like unto his own glorious body, &c. ; Philip iii. 21. 2 Cor. v. 1.

We observe in the course of our present experience, that the most intimate connection subsists between the health of the body, and the powers of the mind. The internal faculties, judgement, memory and imagination, which seem to be suspended, or altogether extinguished, during the continuance of bodily indisposition, revive and resume their full power of exertion, upon the recovery of health. So that whatever might be expected to happen in a degraded state of existence ; yet, from the advancement and perfection of our nature in heaven, it is certain, that the faculties of the mind will also be improved ; and that the memory, so far from losing, shall probably recover the remembrance of many circumstances and events, of which at present the most faint traces cannot be discovered.

Those

Those principles and dispositions, which form the heart to friendship, and which are improved by the exercise of it, appear most deserving of the approbation of others, and are a source of the most rational and pure enjoyment to the individual who has cultivated them. Hence we have ground to expect, that they shall be preserved, and find gratification, in a state, where human nature shall attain the utmost perfection and happiness, of which it is capable. Sooner shall worlds of inanimate matter go to wreck; sooner shall our very being itself be annihilated, than one rational quality, or one benevolent and god-like disposition be suffered to perish, under the administration of a Providence, which delights in what is amiable and good. Agreeable to these observations, the scripture describes the future state of good men by such metaphors as convey the idea of social and pleasant intercourse; such as a city, a nation, a kingdom, a family. Our Lord declares for the comfort

of his disciples; *I go away to prepare a place for you, that where I am, ye may also be.* We are said, in consequence of the hope set before us in the gospel, to be come to the city of the living God, and to the general assembly and church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven.

A free communication of generous sentiments, and participation of the same virtuous employment, shall certainly bind together all the glorious inhabitants of the celestial mansions. At the same time, it is evident to reason, that such as have been formerly placed in the same circumstances; who have enjoyed the same advantages, and escaped the same temptations; perhaps have been mutually assisting in improving the former, and resisting the latter, shall of consequence approach nearer to one another, in a conformity of temper and spirit; be more prepared to hold mutual intercourse, and to unite
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in the same reflections, praises, and schemes of advancing goodness. Is it not natural to think, that the happiness of the blessed in a future world shall, in part, rise out of such employment and association? Will it not be pleasant to think of the scenes of anxiety, pain, and sorrow, which we have left behind us; to reflect upon the temptations over which we have triumphed; and with gratitude to ascribe our success to the happy opportunities and seasonable aids with which a kind Providence has favoured us?

The future state of good men is again representend, as connected with antecedent conduct, and referring to the employment and society with which they were formerly conversant. Future existence is, in general, represented, as having the same relation to this present life, that the season of reaping has to the season of sowing. In plain language, it is declared, that every man shall receive the things done in the

body; and that good men shall rest from their labours, and that their works shall follow them. In what sense can it be said, that they shall receive the things done in the body, and that their works shall follow them, or be rewarded, if they retain no remembrance of them, no consciousness of having performed them? If they retain the remembrance of past actions, shall not coincident events also rise up to the memory? How can we separate conduct in this world from the persons immediately involved in it? Shall we recollect the simple action, and shall not those who were the objects of it, who perhaps had an equal share in it, and kindly prompted us to the performance of it, be utterly obliterated from our remembrance? Reason revolts against the conclusion. The greatest authority refutes it. For does not our blessed Lord represent the persons upon his right hand, as modestly declining the merit of those duties, who are to meet with his applause; and himself, with surpassing candour

bandour and generosity, putting the most favourable constructions upon their actions, and urging upon them the conscioufness and reward of virtue, which they would not have presumed to take home to themselves. *Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the king shall answer, and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, in as much as ye have done*

it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Matth. xxv. 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40.*

Upon the foundation of the doctrine now illustrated, the Apostle Paul suggests consolation to those who mourned for the loss of pious friends. 1. Theff. iv. 13, 14. *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.* That the Apostle in these words refers to the resurrection of good men, or those who sleep in Jesus, as a consequence of his own resurrection, is universally admitted. But if nothing more than this was intended by him,

* The reader may see all the arguments, in support of this pleasant doctrine, fully illustrated in Doctor Price's excellent dissertation upon the future junction of virtuous friends.

him, the argument for comfort were imperfect and unsatisfying. As the promise of future existence, without that consciousness which ascertains identity, or connection with prior scenes of existence, could afford but slight consolation, upon our own account, under the dread of approaching dissolution; so the belief of the future existence of our friends, if they are to be unknown and lost to us, is inadequate to controul that indecent and violent sorrow for which the Apostle rebukes the Thessalonians. It is not therefore unreasonable to suppose, that the hope referred to by the Apostle, implies not only the future existence and happiness of good men, but their future union and intercourse; that they shall live together, and continue their friendship in a future state.

The metaphor by which the Apostle describes the state of departed Christians, encourages this expectation: *I would not have you ignorant, concerning them which are asleep.* The occupations, improvements, and pleasures

pleasures of life, interrupted by the sleep of the night, are resumed with new vigour, upon the return of the day, in consequence of the refreshment imparted to our constitution and faculties. Death is not an everlasting extinction of being : It is only a suspension of the functions of life. It is only a short interruption of enjoyment. The night of death shall be succeeded by the morning of the resurrection, a glorious morning ! when they who sleep in Jesus by virtue of that indissoluble connection, by which they are even now united to him, who is the fountain of life ; and by the operation of that omnipotent power, which brought him from the dead, shall resume their bodies purified from the seeds of infirmity and corruption, and made like unto the glorious body of Jesus. Awakened to life, they shall resume every remembrance and employment suitable to their present dignity : They shall be alive, more than ever alive, to all those pious and benevolent affections, from which they derived the purest and
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most exalted enjoyments in their former state of existence.

P A R T II.

THE doctrine which has now been illustrated, sets before us a notion of heaven reasonable and pleasant, adapted at once to our capacity and most delightful feelings. We cannot, in imagination, admit the idea of happiness, without social intercourse. The improvement, usefulness, and enjoyment of the man, are incompatible with a state of absolute solitude and retirement. But, as happiness is unattainable without society, the degree and refinement of happiness must also depend upon the complexion and qualities of the company with which we associate. When at any time undisturbed by care and anxiety, we have enjoyed free intercourse with men of superior capacity and virtue; when the conversation has turned upon any subject, solid and interesting, and at the same time
easy

easy and pleasant, what have we felt? A serenity and manly pleasure were diffused through the soul: We were exalted above ourselves: We felt an enlargement of capacity, and were inspired with greatness of sentiment, which we never before conceived: The mind seemed to have taken in its full measure of improvement and felicity. What then must it be to dwell for ever amidst a society endowed with perfect faculties, bent upon the noblest entertainments, altogether freed from the anxieties, the rivalships, the infirmities of body and mind which at present dash our attainments in friendship and virtue; and restrain that pure flame of affection, which glows unabated in glorified spirits, and constitutes the noblest joy of heaven?

The notion of friendship continued in a future state, suggests reflections peculiarly interesting to an affectionate heart. How much will worthy souls rejoice in the elevation and establishment of their friendship? They lived here with great sincerity; but
still

still affection was interrupted by jarring opinions and unaccountable caprice, misconstruction of one another's actions, and unguarded sallies of passion. Perhaps it languished through absence, the coldness of advancing years, multiplying cares, and interfering interests. Now it is confirmed beyond all danger of change or decay. Their hearts harmoniously mingle in the warmest raptures of gratitude, whilst they recollect the doubts, the temptations, the gloomy apprehensions, which they were wont to impart to one another in infant days of friendship and of virtue. Perplexing fears and doubts are no more. Their fond, though sometimes staggering hopes, are now terminated in an unchangeable enjoyment.

The dark ways of Providence are now cleared up, and reconciled with the most perfect goodness. The generous heart that often melted for the woes of others, is now more than compensated by transporting congratulations; when he finds that the child of sorrow no more demands his sympathy.

pathy. He seemed to have a hard lot in this world ; tasted few of its pleasures ; languished under poverty and disease ; and his existence was thought a burden. But what are the moments of pain that are past ? Like dangers recollected in the hour of victory, they are converted into so many sources of joy, and serve to enhance the gratitude and the triumph of the glorified spirit. Rachel, who wept for her children no more refuses to be comforted, when she beholds them restored in the bloom of immortal health and beauty. The pangs which pierced her heart, when they seemed to be for ever torn from her embraces, shall be repaid by the sweetness and gratitude of endless friendship.

These considerations ought to encourage us to meditate upon heaven. While we think upon heaven as a country peopled with strange inhabitants, whose manners and sentiments are different from every thing we have hitherto known, or delighted in, no wonder if we wish to thrust it from the
mind,

mind, and take up our everlasting abode in this world. But heaven, the country of our dearest connections, is a subject of the most desirable contemplation. How delightful to mount upon the wings of faith; to penetrate into the habitation of just men made perfect; and to anticipate the transports of grateful piety, which shall flow from the hearts of worthy friends, reunited in a state of perfect virtue and felicity?

Such thoughts of heaven are no less friendly to virtue than to pleasure; they tend to promote elevation and dignity of sentiment, and purity and strictness of conduct. While we think of virtuous friends, and what they now are, we remember what they formerly were, and what they would have us to be. We contemplate, at once, the example and reward of virtue, If we tread in their steps, we shall meet them again, and be what they now are. If they have any knowledge of what passes in this world, and can derive increase of happiness from such knowledge, it must be when

when they behold us advancing in the sure path to glory, honour, and immortality.

These sentiments, familiar and pleasant to the mind, will recur with power and efficacy in the moment of strong temptation. Shall the gratification of unhallowed passions ; shall the transient pleasure or gain of this world, draw down our thoughts from heaven, and prevail upon us to renounce that purity and integrity, by which, only, we can be qualified to become the companions of a glorified society !

The doctrine of our text affords the greatest encouragement to cultivate friendship in a present world. It has been objected to Christianity, that it is defective in its system of morals ; because it has omitted the virtue of private friendship. Behold the Author of our religion, weeping at the grave of Lazarus, whom he loved ! Behold him when just about to encounter the extremity of distress in his own person, forgetting himself, and anxious only about
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the comfort of his desponding friends! Behold him in the last scene of his life, pouring forth his heart in the most tender and affectionate admonitions to his friends; comforting them, ardently praying in their behalf! If you have a heart susceptible of tender impressions, can you fail to admire the most disinterested example of friendship that ever was exhibited to the world? It is, however, more close to my subject, to observe, that the Christian doctrine of a future state, with the additional circumstances illustrated in this discourse, must have a necessary influence in dignifying, and strengthening, and increasing the pleasure of it to all true believers. Life is so precarious, and so short in its utmost duration, and so great a portion of it devoted to care and business, that the pleasures of friendship were reduced to nothing, if we imagine that they are to be utterly extinguished by death. From the natural propensity of the mind, men of all sorts of principles, and in every situation of life, unavoidably enter into friendship; but they neither can hold it in such high estimation,

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nor reap so great benefit from it, while they confine it to the narrow span of our present existence. But how much does it raise the importance of friendship, to reflect that it extends to another world? Every virtuous friend is a treasure to be carried with us thither. In virtuous friendship we lay the foundation of pleasure, that shall grow up, and be coeval with our future existence. Wealth, and power, and grandeur, are the fleeting toys of a day: They are inconstant in life, and we must necessarily leave them at death. But friendship, permanent and improving, shall triumph over the ruins of the grave. Shall I complain that Providence has denied me the means of extensive usefulness or high enjoyment? What! Has it denied me the exercise of friendship? If I have proved a faithful, though, as to present advantage, an unprofitable friend to any one of my fellow creatures, I have not lived in vain: I am thankful for my existence. Am I blessed in return with a friend? I rejoice in the rich bounty of heaven. I boast of

a possession, which wealth cannot purchase ; which power cannot command ; of which fortune cannot deprive me. But, in order to confirm such expectations from friendship, we ought to select as our friends those who are lovers of virtue ; and to render our friendship subservient to the improvement of our minds, as well as to the convenience and amusement of this temporal life. Let us endeavour, as far as it is possible, in a state of infirmity and temptation, to purify our friendship from the low dispositions and selfish aims by which it is but too often debased. Let us animate one another to virtue ; and begin upon earth those delightful exercises, which we hope will be our joint employment in heaven.

The doctrine and observations which have been insisted upon in the above discourse, will contribute to the habitual tranquillity and enjoyment of life ; and prove the most sovereign antidote against more distressful events, to which we are all exposed. Though deep impressions of sor-

row gradually wear out with time and business ; yet there are many seasons and occurrences in life, which awaken the remembrance of departed friends, and darken the moments of prosperity. As often as we are witnesses to the renewed depredations of that disease, which laid low the friend of our youth, the closed wounds of the heart bleed afresh. His low and languishing state, his pangs, his ghastly looks, the agonies of the last awful moment rush into our thoughts, and plunge the soul into an abyss of sorrow. As often as we are invited to pay the last office of respect to a departed neighbour, the eye selects the little dignified spot, in which are deposited the remains of what was once so amiable and dear to us. Imagination enters into the dismal mansion, dwells upon every pitiful circumstance, mourns over the desolated form, and feels what it can no more feel.

Nor is the remembrance of the friend, and the renewal of sorrow, confined to the house of mourning. The revolution of the seasons ;

seasons ; the return of the festival ; the repetition of stated occupations, revive the images of departed friends. The feast is turned into mourning, and the song into lamentation, by the memory of joys that are past.

Our prosperity is marred, since we have lost the friend, whose unfeigned congratulations raised and finished every joy. The calamities of life press with intolerable weight, since we are deprived of that sympathy which soothed and divided them. Even the charms of nature wear a faded complexion. The sun shines not so bright, the blossoms are not so fragrant, nor the song of the birds so melodious, since bereaved of the friend, whose congenial taste quickened our relish, and inflamed our admiration of the works of nature. Connected with the hope of a resurrection, and the future continuation of friendship, the remembrance of deceased friends loses its bitterness. They never knew happiness till now. Should all the honour and prosperity of this life be laid at their feet, they

they would trample upon them with disdain. Nor though aggrandized, are they lost to us. It is to be hoped they still remember us and love us. It is certain they shall again be our friends. We shall partake of their happiness, and be associated with them in the most pure and rational enjoyments.

These reflections are especially seasonable and consolatory to those who mourn for the loss of pious friends. Death shall not dissolve that sweet union, which now subsists between virtuous minds; but, on the contrary, shall render it more firm and joyful, in consequence of the long separation that has intervened, and the improved faculties and dispositions with which they shall meet at the resurrection of the just. We have all of us, in the course of a kind providence, had the experience of scenes truly delightful, even in this chequered and frail state. We have felt what cannot be described, in receiving a friend back from the gates of the grave, or from a distant coast, after a long absence and various scenes

scenes of danger. But no experience of personal pleasure, no description to which the most glowing imagination ever aspired, can convey to us an adequate idea of the raptures of joy, with which virtuous friends shall meet after the long night of separation by death. Behold parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters! behold a world of virtuous friends congratulating upon being restored to life, restored to one another, and united in the regions of light, perfection and everlasting joy!

The doctrine contained in my text, displays the excellence of the Christian religion, and ought to increase our thankfulness for it. It conveys to its votaries relief adequate to the most pressing calamities of human life; it affords consolation when all other resources fail; it gives us back our friends again; it is to the affectionate heart the pearl of great price. Immortality, without the expectation of being united to our friends, appears a dark unpleasant prospect. Existence cut off, for ever
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cut off from the intercourse of those whom we love cannot satisfy the desire of the heart. Why does the name of exile grate the ear and weigh down the heart? Why is it dreaded more than death? It is not the allurements of inanimate nature, the excellence of the climate, the richness of the soil, nor the verdure of the fields, which chain down happiness to a narrow spot of earth. *By the rivers of Babylon we sat down; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion.* Friends are the ornament, the riches, and the attraction of our native land. With them the wilderness and solitary place is made glad; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. My dear departed friends, if ever I forget you, if ever I forget that religion, which only can render the remembrance of you supportable, may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, and my right hand forget its skill. *Thanks be to God who has given us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

F I N I S . .



